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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

St. Helena Island

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FOLK CULTURE ON ST. HELENA ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

BY

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CHAPEL HILL
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FOR

J. E. J.

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PREFACE

THIS VOLUME is one of three which have grown out of 121
a study of Negro culture on St. Helena Island, South 114
Carolina, made under the joint auspices of the Institute
for Research in Social Science of the University of North (122)
Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. *Black
Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., contains a comprehensive treatment of the whole round of life on St. Helena
Island today, and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by
Guion Griffis Johnson, sets forth the historical antecedents
of the culture of the sea island region.

The present volume deals with certain major aspects of 128
the folk culture of St. Helena Island, namely, dialect, folk
songs, and folklore. The section on dialect attempts to
describe the Gullah dialect traits. The section on folk
songs describes the status of folk songs on St. Helena
Island today and then digresses at some length upon the
question of the relation of American Negro music to Eng~~lish and~~ American folk music. The general reader may
be disappointed in such a discussion, but I feel that this is
the time and place for it to be put forth. Mr. Ballanta's 128
excellent collection entitled *St. Helena Island Spirituals* 114
makes it unnecessary for me to publish additional spirituals. At the same time, his work, with its insistence on
the African origin of the various characteristics of the
Negro spirituals, makes it imperative that someone point
out that there is much to be said for a white ancestry for
the music of the spirituals. This I have attempted to do,
the result being somewhat supplementary to Mr. Bal-

128 114 lanta's contributions, and at the same time something of a note of caution to those who are too quick to ascribe to Africa the peculiarities of American Negro folk music.

The final section sketches briefly the folklore of St. Helena Island, with enough illustrative material to lend concreteness to the outline. It should be read as supplementary to the larger work, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, by Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons, published by the American Folk-Lore Society in 1923.

It would be proper to include in the present work an account of the customs, folkways, and mores of the Islanders, but since these are ably treated in T. J. Woofter, Jr.'s, *Black Yeomanry*, I have omitted them in order to avoid duplication.

128 [127 I am indebted to numerous persons on St. Helena Island for generously contributing folk songs, folk tales, and other folk material; especially to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn School, for facilitating the collection of data in many ways; to Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, for reading the section on dialect and making valuable suggestions; to Professor Arthur Palmer Hudson, of the University of Mississippi, for reading the entire manuscript and making critical notations, some of which I have incorporated into the work; to Professor Harold S. Dyer, Head of the Department of Music, University of North Carolina, for reading the section on folk songs; to Miss Katharine Jocher, of the Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina, for assistance in preparing the manuscript for the press; to

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Dr. T. J. Woofter, Jr., director of the study of St. Helena Island, for constant interest and advice in the work; and to Mr. George Foster Peabody and the Corporation of Yaddo for a summer at Triuna Island, Lake George, where the preparation of the manuscript was begun.

G. B. J.

Chapel Hill
July, 1930

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I

GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

INTRODUCTION

THE NEGROES of St. Helena Island speak a dialect 197
which is peculiar to the Negroes of the tidewater section of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] So unusual is the dialect of this area that an up-country person on first hearing it is likely to think that he is listening to a foreign language. It is as different from what is generally thought of as Negro dialect as the speech of the white Georgian is from that of the Chicagoan. With its rapidly spoken phrases, its staccato accents, and its rising and falling intonations, it sounds to the average American more like French or Spanish than any English he has ever heard.

This dialect is known as Gullah, as are also the Ne- (101)
groes who speak it. How the word Gullah came to be so
applied cannot be determined satisfactorily. Certainly it 101
has no ethnological significance, for the slaves were not 175
derived from any one tribal group in sufficient numbers 569

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[1] This dialect was first brought to the attention of scholars by such works as Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, 1837; William Gilmore Simms', *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, 1845, and other stories; and Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1861. Later writers like Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, and Charles C. Jones published collections of folklore in the dialect. Still later the dialect began to receive some attention for its own sake, chiefly from John Bennett, Ambrose Gonzales, Marcellus S. Whaley, and Reed Smith. The articles by Bennett, published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, and Jan., 1909, and the recent study by Smith, published as Extension Bulletin No. 190, University of South Carolina, contain the best analyses of the dialect. I have drawn freely from these and other sources for suggestions. For further references to the literature on Gullah, see the bibliography. (113)

101 for that group to play an important role. Such evidence
175 as we have, although it is rather meager, seems to indicate
567 that the tribal composition of the slaves was a hodge-podge
of a score or more of West and Central African peoples. In the records of the Charleston slave merchants and in the files of *The South Carolina Gazette* will be found statements which prove the diversity of African stocks among the slaves. A recent research reveals that the following African tribes or regions were specifically mentioned in the Charleston slave market:[2] Gambia River, Whidah, Fantee, Coromantine, Bassa, Bance Island, Angola, Bight, Calabar, Messe-Congo, and Ebo.

101 In an excellent study of the Gullah dialect, Professor
174 Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, comments as follows on the probable origin of the term Gullah:[3]

> Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River. A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year

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[113] [2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade in South Carolina Before the Revolution." *American Historical Review*, July, 1928. Miss Donnan makes this pertinent comment in a footnote: "It is a puzzling fact that the marked differences between the negro tribes, regarded as so important on their arrival, seem to have been speedily lost sight of. Advertisements of seasoned negroes, in so far as the writer has examined them, seldom emphasize the tribe or African locality from which the negro came; notices of runaway negroes occasionally mention place of origin but frequently do not. The evidence seems also to indicate that country-born negroes had lost all distinguishing characteristics or that the planter had grown oblivious to them with his longer association with the negroes."

[113] [3] *Gullah*, pp. 7-8. The Charleston City Council entry mentioned is probably that found in *An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection*, etc., published by A. E. Miller, Charleston, 1822.

1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola. 101 174

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as the Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia.

Mr. John Bennett, who made the first serious study of the history and characteristics of Gullah, held this view. He says:[4] 197 101

> The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the "quaquas, because they gabbled like geese."

Which of these theories is the more plausible is difficult to say. The derivation of the word Gullah is one thing and its usage another. Regardless of its true derivation, it came to be applied, not exclusively to one type of Negro, but to the Negroes of the sea-island and coastal region in general. Any ethnological significance that the word may have had at first was soon lost, and it seems likely that the entry of the Charleston City Council of 1822 represented the prevailing idea as to the derivation of the word. If the Golas were really important, would not the difference between them and the Angolas have become common knowledge after more than a hundred years 101

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[4] "Gullah: A Negro Patois." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908. There is room for difference of opinion as to whether the Gullah speech is harsh or quacking. It did not strike me that way at all. (113)

101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[5]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the
> (243) chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under
> (248) slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the
> (567) wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart.
> 175 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters.
> 567 The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-
> (178) hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

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[5] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

sionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and 175
grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, 567
growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost 178
complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged.

This picture is accurate for the period following the 175
introduction of rice and cotton culture. There was, however, a period preceding the development of the large plantation system during which the South Carolina colonists made their living chiefly from small plantings and from naval stores and other products arising from the process of clearing the land: pitch, masts, beams, staves, and the like. It took years to build up a large plantation. Among the early land holders there were probably very few who had enjoyed a status of wealth and high education in the mother country. The typical settler was an English peasant, laborer, or middle-class man with very limited means who began with a small piece of land and gradually increased his holdings, acquiring indentured servants or slaves or both for his labor supply. There was here and there a man of wealth and distinction, but the typical colonist was a man of small means, one who spoke dialect English, as distinguished from literary English. The most numerous class in the colony before the 175
slave trade began to flourish was composed of indentured 177
servants, laborers, and artisans. They worked side by 567
side with the Negroes and came into contact with them in 191
various other ways, and it was from them that the slaves learned most of their English.

175 177 191 567 197 Another important factor in the development of Gullah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his language to a lower level when communicating with someone who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than the English dialect which the white servants and laborers around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.[6] Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

175 567 177 The Civil War and emancipation made very little difference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they were now more isolated than before, because many of the white planters, made penniless by the war, left their plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

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[6] The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have 177
not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or 131
coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by [505]
water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief [484]
towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished 197
in isolation and has survived with little change because of 178
the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the 197
Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of 000
Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

000 of the low-country aristocracy. An expert in South Carolina linguistics can listen to a low-country man for a moment and tell whether he is from Georgetown, Charleston, Edisto, Beaufort, or some other locality. The low-country speech has certain characteristics which distinguish it from the up-country speech, as is true in the case of the Negro, yet there are local variations depending upon the English background and subsequent environment of particular families and neighborhoods.

175 567 191 197 The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance, but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible. In order to accommodate the slave to the routine of plantation life, as well as in the interest of discipline and order, the planters saw to it that new Negroes were distributed so as to work with seasoned slaves. This broke up tribal bonds and made difficult the survival of Africanisms. The learning of English was a practical necessity. It was the only medium of linguistic exchange. Only thus could the slave understand his overseer, converse with his fellows, and comprehend the interesting things which took place about him. So thorough was the language substitution that there now remains only a handful of words which are indisputably of African origin and which have attained to a respectable degree of diffusion.

000 American white speech areas—New England, Northern, Western, Southern, etc.—owe their origin to the dialects of England.[7] Characteristics of Southern speech, for

---

[7] Only recently was it realized that this is true. American scholars have been in the habit of supposing that our dialect areas represent different stages in the development of standard English in England. But there was really no standard three hundred years ago except among the literary and court people. Even today there are places in England where standard English has made little difference

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example, which are often attributed to climate or lassitude 000
or to the influence of the Negro, are merely the continuation
of the speech patterns of the English who settled the
South Atlantic coast.[8] The Negro took over the English 191
of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it 177
remarkably well. White speech has undergone some degree 000
of change, moving a little nearer, perhaps, toward a
standard American English, but, because of cultural isolation,
the Negro lags behind, thus conserving the white
man's linguistic past.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE DIALECT

There is considerable variation to be found in the 194
printed records of Gullah dialect. Part of this is due to 126
the local and individual variations in phonology and part
is due to the personal element of the recorder. The

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with the plain people, who go on talking as they did in Shakespeare's day. There 000
were several dialect areas, the major areas being the Scotch or Northern, the Midland, the Eastern, the Southern, and the Southwestern. Coastal New England, Virginia, and South Carolina were settled largely from southern, southeastern, and southwestern England. More than a hundred years later the northern English and Scotch-Irish poured into America, dominating the pronunciation of the North and West, but not modifying greatly the speech of the oldest section of New England. The Scotch-Irish came into the South from the Middle States via the Shenandoah Valley, settling the piedmont and mountain regions. Spoken English in the latter sections is now a blend of the Scotch-Irish type with the southern English type which pushed westward from the Atlantic coast settlements in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. For a suggestive article setting forth a similar point of view, see Hans Kurath, "The Origins of the Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English." *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.

[8] Take the Southern *r* for example. The Negro had nothing to do with our losing it. References to the distinction between the rough or Scotch *r* and the smooth or southern English *r* occurred in the grammars and dictionaries of three hundred years ago. Evidence drawn from rhyming words and from plays written in dialect shows that the *r* of lower England was the same as our Southern *r*. A later reference in the third edition (1823) of Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* is interesting: "In England, and particularly in London, the *r* in *lard, bard, card, regard,* etc., is pronounced so much in the throat as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a*, lengthened into *laad, baad, caad, regaad.*" (Quoted by Kurath, *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.)

194 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-mush
126 effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have
(114) succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

539 The following specimens will not only serve to introduce
(19) the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

1[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh[1] spy Buh Goat duh leddown[2] topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

---

(576) [9] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

(113) [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

ketch um. Wen eh git close ter um eh notus um good. But Goat keep on chaw. Buh Lion try fuh fine out wuh Buh Goat duh eat. Eh yent[3] see nuttne[4] nigh um ceptin de nekked rock wuh eh duh leddown on. Buh Lion stonish. Eh wait topper Buh Goat. Buh Goat keep on chaw, an chaw, an chaw. Buh Lion cant mek de ting out, an eh come close, an eh say: "Hay! Buh Goat, wuh you duh eat?" Buh Goat skade[5] wen Buh Lion rise up befo um, but eh keep er bole harte, an eh mek ansur: "Me dun chaw dis rock, an ef you don leff, wen me done long um me guine eat you." Dis wud sabe Buh Goat. Bole man git outer diffikelty way[6] coward man lose eh life.

[1] he. [2] lie down. [3] ain't. [4] nothing. [5] scared. [6] where.

II[11]

"Ben, you are a big strong man, why did you let that woman beat you?"

"Gin'ul, lemme tell you de trute, Gawd bin wid me dat day. You know, all me life uh bin uh strong man. Uh nebbuh hab no man fuh outdo me fuh wu'k, ceduhso[1] fuh fight, en[2] uh bin nyuse[3] fuh lick 'ooman en' t'ing all me life. W'en 'ooman ent sattify me wid 'e wu'k, ceduhso 'e manus,[4] uh lick'um fuh mek'um mannusuble. W'en my wife Sarah' son John' wife come een my house dat day, 'en sassy 'tell 'e mek me bex. Uh nebbuh tek sassy f'um no 'ooman, uh dunkyuh[5] ef 'e big ez cow, en' da' gal big 'ooman fuh true. So uh cut one 'tick[6] en' uh graff'um[7] by 'e sleebe en' biggin fuh lick'um. Gin'ul, de 'ooman tu'n on me en' box me same lukkuh[8] him duh man. Blood hin een me yeye[9]! Uh 'membuh de time w'en uh could'uh box'um en' kick'um alltwo[10] one time, en' ef uh ebbuh leh de *foot* folluh de *han'*, uh would uh kill'um *dead*. But Gawd hol' me han' en' me foot, alltwo, Gawd tell me fuh peaceubble, en' spayre de 'ooman life. Gin'ul, me don' want no 'ooman life 'pun me han'. Enty[11] you know, suh, ef uh had uh kick dat 'ooman 'e would uh dead? Gawd tek' care uh ol' Ben dat day. Da' 'ooman t'ink suh him lick me, Gin'ul, but enty you know, suh, him oughtuh tengk Gawd fuh sabe'um? Ef uh didn' bin hab 'lij'un, da' 'ooman cawpse would'uh gone Jacksinburruh

[11] From Gonzales, *The Black Border*, pp. 168-69.

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539 een one oxin cyaa't[12] weh 'e come f'um. All de time 'e binnuh box me, uh bin study 'bout how da' 'ooman' cawpse would'uh look ef uh had uh hit 'um like de time w'en uh nyuse to be uh Ben! En' uh study 'pun him husbun', my wife Sarah boy John, en' un study 'pun John' maamy, en' uh t'ink 'bout how dem will mo'n ef uh kill dis 'ooman, en' wid Gawd help us hab strengk 'nuf fuh hol' me han'. Gin'ul, w'enebbuh uh look 'puntop de' dead 'ooman een me mine', uh tengk Gawd eb'ry day fuh hol' me han'!" . . .

[1] either so, i.e. either, or, nor, etc. [2] and. [3] used, accustomed to. [4] manners. [5] don't care. [6] stick. [7] grab them (her). [8] like a, as if. [9] eye. [10] both. [11] ain't. [12] cart.

III[12]

"Wey[1] yo' is bun[2]? Tell me say."
"Down een[3] de 'za'b[4]."
"Wuh[5] yuh bun duh do down de-dey[6] een de 'za'b?"
"Bun duh fush[7]."
"Ketch um?"
"Sho'!"
"How many?"
"Too many[8]."
"Lemme shum[9]! Wey 'e dey[10]?"
"'E de-dey[11]."
"Wey?"
"Dey de-dey, Opey do[12]!"
"Yunt[13] opey do' twill me yiz shum[14]!"
"Yunt gwine shum twill opey do'!"

[1] where. [2] been. [3] in. [4] reserve, a compound of fresh water. [5] what. [6] there. [7] fish. [8] very many. [9] see them. [10] where are they (where he there)? [11] here they are (he right there). [12] open the door. [13] ain't. [14] till I see them.

IV[13]

Regardless of who might be fishing, "Dah Dannil" would always catch more fish than any other in the boat. If one should ask him how he accomplished that feat, he would invariably, should others be present, whisper the secret of his success: "Well, I tell yuh, son, but yuh ain'fuh tell *nubbody*, cuz I nebbuh tell

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(113)

[12] From Bennett, "Gullah: a Negro Patois," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, VII, p. 334.

[13] From Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, pp. 128-29.

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nubbody yet. You see yuh ain'fuh trow yuh line *way out* like you see dese odduh peepul like'fuh do; but droppum right by de boat, den tek you' finguh en lif' de sinkuh *lee-ee-tul* piece offuh de bottum en lem drop bac'. Do diss eb'ry wunce w'ile en dih fish notuss dih bait bettuh. Dat's de reazun I ket mo' fish den de torruh' wun."

Not only was he the prince of camp cooks, but after serving a magnificent supper on the beach of bass steak, grainy "griss'," flapjacks and hot coffee, not to mention delectable side-dishes, he would relate with great gusto and much gesticulation his warcamp experiences. An inveterate smoker, the boys would keep him supplied with cigars. Gathered around him in the moonlight, they would sit for hours, as much pleased to listen as the old mestizo was to relate.

"Yuh'see, son," he was telling them upon one occasion, "we binnuh camp tih Uhrange Hill pon John Ilun, en de Yankee bin tic" pontoppuh' Seabrook Bay sukkuh' ant, en we bin trow we picket out tuh Haulobuh' Cut. Now wun night de picket wuh' bin'fuh do jooty', bin wun kine'uh *skittesh* nyung man, en een dih night wen mos' eb'rybody een de camp bin fass uhsleep, yuh' we yeddy' dih hawss down dih road frum Haulobuh' Cut side. *Bliggity, bliggity, bliggity,* lay'out tuh 'e lenk, de hawss tayre eentih camp. De Yankee *exwancin'* de Yankee *exwancin!* Yuh de *debb'l tih'play*. De drum roll—de bugle en de fice" blow—de picket duh holluh fuh we *mekkase*". Den obuh all de nize", I yeddy de Majuh woice; "Fall'een mens, *fall'een*. Leh'dem cummon en we gih dem HELL tinnight'. En de Majuh, 'e ain' bin faid" dih de debbul. Nuttin' suit 'im bettuh den fuh fight, 'e dinkyuh" ef deh duh t'ousun" Yankee en duh hunnud'uh we. Him wann *fight*, but some'uh dem odduh wun, dem binnuh kinduh skittesh. . . .

"Fo'yuh kin tun 'roun' I hab de waggin' hitch'up en all dih ting" eennum. Dem orduh 'mih fuh fall bac', cuz ef de Yankee bin obuhpow'r dem, I could sabe de bittle. I jump een dih waggin ennuh crac' mih wip ennuh nebbuh stop 'tell'uh git spam 'cross dih bridge at Chuch Flat—dah bin 'bout eight mile—en den I keep-

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539 pon 'tell I git'tuh Willtown road—*twenty mile mo'*—ennuh halt fuh'uh seazun. I ain' bindeh[17] long fo' day bruk en wun fass riduh obuhtek'mih, gih'mih metsidge seh fuh tun bac'. 'E seh ain'duh no Yankee *'tall;* seh binnuh stingry[18] duh tun'obuh een Haulobuh' Cut, en dih pickit binnuh *sway*[15] duh *Yankee* duh paddle boat *cummin'* 'cross."

[1] other. [2] grits. [3] thick. [4] on, on top of. [5] like, like a. [6] who, what. [7] duty. [8] here. [9] hear. [10] fife. [11] make haste. [12] noise. [13] afraid. [14] don't care. [15] thousand. [16] things. [17] been there. [18] stingray (a fish).

V[14]

Ber Wolf had a pease-patch. An' every night somebody go in de pease-patch an' eat de pease. So Ber Wolf made a tar baby an' set him up in de yard. So Ber Rabbit went in de patch, an' he meet de tar baby standin' up. So Ber Rabbit said, "Good-mornin', gal!" Tar Baby ain't go no manners, say nothin'. Say, "Man, I slap you." His hand fasten. Ber Rabbit say, "I got anoder han'." So he hit him wid dat han! Dat one fasten. Ber Rabbit said, "I got a head." Said he butt him wid de head. De head fasten. "Gal, you don't see I got a foot?" So he kick him wid de foot. De foot fasten. "I kick him wid de oder foot." Dat one fasten. Ber Rabbit said, "I got a mout'.' De mout' fasten. Den Rabbit say, "Tu'n me loose!"

Next t'ing come along Wolf. Wolf say, "I ketch yer, t'ief! you eat all my pease. I putshyer head down on de choppin'-block an' chop em off."—"Oh, don't duh dat! Dat will kill me." Say, "I want ter kill you." Say, "I'll t'row you in de creek, drown you." "Ah, don't duh dat!" he say. "Yes, Ber Wolf, t'row me in de briar-patch! Den you'll kill me." When Ber Wolf t'row him in de briar-patch, Rabbit say, "Ping! Ping! Dat's de place my mammy done born me!" So dat ol' rabbit git away.

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19 From these brief passages one can see that the outstanding characteristics of the dialect may be expressed as follows: (1) economy in vocalization, as evidenced by the short cuts in tenses, pronouns, number, gender, etc.; (2)

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[14] From Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, pp. 26-7.

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use 539
of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more 19
than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing
features as one gets them from the printed page. Per- 194
haps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way
it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their
sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which
has to be heard to be understood.

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law 128
and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is 193
no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and 194
development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its
phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will (177)
become more and more apparent that practically every
detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly
descended from the midland and southern English dialects.

PHONOLOGY[15] 194

Vowels

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

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[15] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The (113) monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data.

194 comes *laak*, *spark* is *spaak*, and *palm* is *paam*. These flat *a* sounds are merely survivals of English dialect speech.[16] They are still found in England, and they are common among the low-country white people in South Carolina.[17] Their frequency gives a flat tinge to the whole Gullah dialect.

In words like *father*, *water*, *watch*, the *a*, not being affected by an *r* or an *l*, is pronounced practically the same as in standard English, although local and individual variations occur, ranging from the flat *a* of the type mentioned above to the broad *a* of *father*.

(*a*, as in *hat*)

Many words which in the standard language have this sound of *a* have in Gullah the broad *a*, as in *father*. Acoustically this sound is about the same as the *o* in *hot*, *pot*, etc. Thus we hear *mon*, *bock*, *plont*, *robbit*, *foctry*, for *man*, *back*, *plant*, *rabbit*, *factory*. This *a* sound gives some strange effects when used with words having the flat *a*. Thus *daak mon* for *dark man*, *maash lon* for *marsh land*. Occasionally *back* is pronounced *beck* [pet]. In England the prevailing sound of *a* in these words was broad, with a sprinkling of narrow *a* in the southern counties.

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[128] In order that the general reader may not be disturbed over phonetic symbols which mean nothing to him, I have not used any symbols other than the conventional alphabet. However, by means of bracketed words I have tried to describe the various sounds accurately, so that any phoneticist may translate them into his system if he desires. A word inclosed in brackets indicates the vowel sound meant in a certain spelling. For example, the statement that "*cost* is pronounced *caust* [*haul*]" means that the vowel sound *au* is to be pronounced exactly like the *au* in *haul*.

[16] See *English Dialect Grammar*, Chap. i, also pp. 30-32, also index under various words having this *a* sound. Hereafter this work will be referred to in footnotes as *E. D. G.*

[17] *Paa* and *maa* for *pa* and *ma*, *maash* for *marsh*, and many others are frequent.

(*a*, *ea*, *ai*, as in *take*, *great*, *wait*)

Words like *bake*, *take*, *wait*, *great*, etc., are pronounced as if the vowel were the *e* in *get*, *pet*, etc. Thus *bek*, *tek*, *wet*, *gret*. One hears in the spirituals that "heaven is a beautiful *pless*," and that "I'm on my *weh*, *prez* de Lawd, I'm on my *weh*." The source of these pronunciations is again the English dialects. For example, the *English Dialect Grammar* records fifteen pronunciations of *bake*, ten of which have the *e* [g*e*t] sound or a very close approximation to it. These occur chiefly in the midland, southern, and southwestern counties.

(*e*, *ea*, as in *bed*, *dead*)

A few words which have this sound in the standard language have almost the sound of *ai* as in *pail*, *nail*. Thus *baid*, *baig*, *daid*, *haid*, for *bed*, *beg*, *dead*, *head*. These pronunciations, according to the *English Dialect Grammar*, are still common in England. They are found in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northampton, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Somerset, and Devonshire.

There are some interesting exceptions, however, in the pronunciation of this vowel sound. For example, for *instead*, some Negroes would say *instid* or *stid*, others would give the vowel the standard pronunciation. For *yellow* it would be difficult to find anything but *yalluh*; *get* is invariably *git*, and *deaf* is always *deef*. These variations are all rooted in English dialect pronunciations. *Stid* and *stead* were of about equal popularity in England.[18] *Yalluh* and *yawluh* were so common as to leave room for few other pronunciations of *yellow*.[19] As for *get*, Wright has

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[18] *E. D. G.*, index, p. 618.

[19] *E. D. G.*, pp. 692-93.

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194 not recorded a single instance of the *e* being changed to *ai* [*pail*], but *git* occurs in Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Leicester, Worcester, Buckingham, Bedford, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Isle of Wight, Somerset, Devonshire, Cornwall, and parts of Ireland.[20] *Deef* for *deaf* occurs in practically all of the above counties and in the following besides: Stratford, Derby, Northampton, Shropshire, Pembroke, Gloucester, Cambridge, Essex, Dorset.[21] With such an incidence the Negro could hardly have escaped saying *git* and *deef*.

(*e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, plus *r*, as in *certain*, *circle*, *word*, *church*)

Words having this vowel sound are generally pronounced in the Gullah with the sound of *uh*, like the *u* in *bud*. Thus *sutn* for *certain*, *sukkle* for *circle*, *wud* for *word*, *chuch* for *church*, etc. These are all English dialect pronunciations, arising from the effect of the *r* following these vowels. The *English Dialect Grammar* shows these pronunciations to be common at present in the south midland and southern English dialects. For example, *bird* is listed under seven pronunciations, three of which might be represented by *bahd*, *bawd*, and *brid*. The others are all *bud*, or very close approximations to it, and they are found in midland and southern England. Similarly, eighteen pronunciations of *word* are listed, eleven of which, found in all sections below Northumbria, are like the Gullah *wud*.

In a few words of this class we find alongside the *uh* sound other pronunciations which reflect the Negro's tendency to take over exactly the pronunciation with which he came in contact. Thus besides *sutn* for *certain*, we also find *sartn*, *sairtn* (the *r* is actually pronounced!); besides *subbunt* for *servant*, also *sarbunt*, *sairbunt*, *saabunt*, etc.; besides *such* for *search*, also *sarch*, *saach*, etc. One thinks immediately of the Englishman's *Darby*, *Hartford*, *clark*, for *Derby*, *Hertford*, *clerk*, and of the pronunciation of *vermin* as *varmint*, so common among uneducated whites in this country. In fact, all of the pronunciations of this sort in the Gullah are also found in various parts of the country among illiterate whites.

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[20] *E. D. G.*, p. 460.

[21] *E. D. G.*, p. 400. *Git* and *Deef* are, of course, still widely used by uneducated white people in the United States.

(*i*, *y*, as in *hit*, *physic*)

Words having this vowel sound are ordinarily pronounced as in standard English. Such exceptions as exist are easily accounted for by English dialect. For instance, *feesh* and *fush* [push] for *fish* are sometimes heard, likewise *deesh* for *dish*, *sperit* [merit] for *spirit*, and *leetle* for *little*. Wright states that in England *i* has been lengthened to *ee* before *sh* in words like *fish* and *dish* in parts of Lancashire, Derby, Norfolk, Somerset, and Devon.[22] *Sperit* for *spirit* is common in parts of Lancashire, Lincoln, Worcester, Gloucester, and Oxford.[23]

(*o*, *oa*, as in *note*, *coat*)

Words having this vowel sound are generally given the standard pronunciation, except that occasionally there is a tinge of the sound of *u* as in *but*. Hence *goat* may sound like *guet* (*u* as in *but*, *e* unstressed).[24]

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[22] *E. D. G.*, p. 71.

[23] *E. D. G.*, p. 183.

[24] This pronunciation noted in the *E. D. G.*, p. 188, as found in several counties in words like *coat*, *coach*, *roam*, *pony*.

(*o*, *a*, as in *not*, *was*)

This sound does not differ much from the standard. *Was* and *what* become *wus* and *whut*, but these are about as common among illiterate whites as among Negroes. Words like *cost*, *lost*, *coffin*, become *caust* [h*au*l], *laust*, *caufin*. These are such good white pronunciations that many people would not understand why any distinction is made between *cost* and *caust*. In this connection it is interesting to note that Wright says that this short *o* sound has been lengthened into the *au* sound in the south midland, southern, eastern, and southwestern English dialects.[25]

(*ou*, *ow*, as in *out*, *cow*)

Most words having this vowel sound are given the standard pronunciation. However, *cow* is usually pronounced *coe* [t*oe*] and *sow* is usually *soe*. These pronunciations were common in midland and southern England.[26]

(*oi*, *oy*, as in *oil*, *oyster*)

This vowel becomes *i* [p*i*le]. Thus *oil* is *ile*, *boil* is *bile*,[27] *poison* is *pizen*, *oyster* is *eister* [h*ei*ght]. These pronunciations were and are common in England and are still so frequently heard in this country as to need no comment on their occurrence in the Gullah. An exception here is *boy*, which is usually given the standard vowel sound. This is probably due to the fact that in England the *i* sound in this word was not nearly as widely used as in the other *oi* and *oy* words.[28]

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[25] *E. D. G.*, p. 184.

[26] See *E. D. G.*, index, under *sow*, etc.

[27] Samuel Johnson wrote: "*Bile:* this is generally spelt *boil*, but, I think, less properly."

[28] *E. D. G.*, index, under *boy*, *oil*, etc.

(*u*, *o*, *oo*, *ou*, as in *rule*, *who*, *food*, *you*)

This vowel is the same in the Gullah as in literary English, except that *to* is pronounced *toe* [h*oe*] and *you* is sometimes *yoe*. This pronunciation also survives among many of the old white families of the low country.

(*u*, *ou*, as in *brush*, *touch*)

When this sound occurs in initial *un*, it becomes *on*. Thus *oncommon*, *onbutton*, *onlock*, etc. This pattern came from the English dialects. In various dialect glossaries and in *The English Dialect Dictionary* are found *un*-words spelled with *on*, as *onaccountable*, *onchoke*, *onderground*, *oncouth*, and numerous others.

In words where this vowel follows a consonant it usually becomes *e* [m*e*t][29]. The chief examples of this kind are *brush*, *judge*, *just*, *touch*, which are pronounced *bresh*, *jedge*, *jest* (also *jist*), *tetch*. These are all of English dialect descent[30] and are common among illiterate whites in the South.

With insignificant exceptions, the remaining vowel sounds are the same in Gullah as in standard English. It is little short of remarkable how the vowel pronunciations in the Gullah correlate with the deviations of English dialect from the standard language. I have yet to find an example of a pronunciation, other than an individual idiosyncrasy, which is not easily explicable on the basis of midland and southern English dialect.

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[29] And in a few words *i* [*sit*]. Thus *jist* for *just*, *kivver* for *cover*. These pronunciations are general in the dialects of England, Scotland, and Ireland. See *E. D. G.*, p. 192.

[30] *E. D. G.*, index, under the various words having this vowel sound, also p. 192.

Consonants

The points wherein the consonants in the dialect differ from the standard language will now be indicated. For simplicity I am taking the consonants in alphabetical order rather than classifying them as liquids, labials, gutturals, etc., as is sometimes done.

b. This consonant is sometimes omitted in the medial position in words such as *nummuh*, number, *rammle*, ramble, *grumlin*, grumbling, etc. Similar pronunciations are found among uncultivated whites, who inherited them from England. Wright says, *b* "hardly ever occurs in any of the dialects between *m-l* or *m-r* in such words as *bramble, thimble, chamber, number.*"[31]

In some words medial *b* is changed to *v*. Thus *navuh*, neighbor, *lavuh*, labor.[32] A *b* is nearly always found in chimney: *chimbly.*[33]

c. This consonant has generally remained the same as in standard English.

d. In a few words *d* has become *j*: *ijuh*, idea, *jew*, dew, *jues*, dues, *Injun*, Indian, etc.[34] Medial *d* is omitted in some words, e. g., *bunnle*, bundle, *cannle*, candle, *chillun*, children, etc.[35] Final *d* is omitted in a great many words where *d* follows *n* or *l*, as in band, bind, blind, fold, bold, hand, land, wind, etc. This is common among American white people and was brought over from the

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[31] Elizabeth Mary Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore*, p. 135.

[32] Gonzales reports these in his glossary in *The Black Border*. They are not at all common on St. Helena. A parallel is found in the widespread English dialect pronunciation, *marvel* for *marble*. See Wright, *Rustic Speech*, p. 135.

[33] Very common in England.

[34] *Cf.* Wright, *Dialect Grammar*, p. 231, for identical tendency in English dialect.

[35] The same is true in English dialects. *Cf.* Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

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southern and midland English dialects.[36] In a few words final *d* becomes *t*, as *islant*, island, *rappit*, rapid, *sallet*, salad, *ballet*, ballad. This is also an English dialect characteristic.

f. This consonant is generally the same as in literary English. In *after*, however, it is omitted: *atter*.[37] Because of the close kinship of *f* and *v*, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a speaker has said *afford* or *avord*, *before* or *bevore*, *if* or *iv*.[38] However, I am fairly certain that I occasionally heard the *v* sound in such combinations as these where the vowel of a preceding word made the transition to *v* easy: "de vamous mahn," "Uh veed muh oxen," " 'e veel bahd," etc.

g. This consonant is the same in all positions in the dialect as it is in standard English, except for the occurrence of an unnecessary *g* in a few words, e. g., *reinge*, reins; *mange*, mane.

h. This consonant follows the standard English habit: in the initial *wh* position it is dropped in many words, but is sometimes prefixed to a word beginning with a vowel, especially when the speaker wants to be emphatic. Thus *halligatuh*, alligator, *w'ite*, white, *w'en*, when.

j. and *k*. Both of these consonants are the same in all positions as in standard English, except that *k* sometimes sounds more like *g* than *k*. Thus *teng Gawd*, thank God.

l. Medial *l* is dropped in a few words, e. g., *a'ways* (sometimes *allus*), *a'most*, *a'ready* (sometimes *'ready*),

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

[37] Wright, *ibid.*, p. 227, says that in England "*f* has disappeared before *t* in *after* in the eastern, midland, southern, and south-western counties." *After* and *water* in *Jack and Jill* were supposed to rhyme.

[38] The use of *v* for initial *f* was quite common in England at the time of the settlement of South Carolina. It is now obsolescent.

194 *se'f, he'p.* All these forms are English dialect forms and are still widely used by white people. *Frail,* meaning to whip or lash, survives in the Gullah. It originated in England through a change of *l* to *r* in the word *flail.* It is also common among Southern white people. An *l* occurs in chimney: *chimbly.*

m. This does not differ from the use of *m* in the standard language.

n. An *n* is prefixed to some words, especially words beginning with a *u* or *yu* sound: *Nyankee,* Yankee, *nyoung,* young, *nyam,* yam,[39] *nused,* used, *nignore,* ignore, etc. English dialect contains numerous words like *namble,* amble, *narrow,* arrow, *naunt,* aunt, *nuncle,*[40] uncle, *noration,* oration, *nidiot,* idiot, but practically all such words arose from the *n* of a preceding *an* being carried over. It is doubtful if this tendency can account for all the intrusive *n*'s in Gullah. It may be that here we have a survival of an African language trait.

An initial *n* sound often precedes a consonant in West African words. *However, the Gullah exhibits no instance of intrusive n preceding a true consonant.* Furthermore, the number of words having this intrusive *n* is relatively small. It may be, then, that, after all, the instances noted above either came from English dialect or arose in the Negro's English learning process.

Medial *n* is pronounced as *m* in a few words: *grampa* or *grumpuh,* grandpa, *gramma,* grandma. These were English dialect pronunciations in the south midland and southeastern counties. They are also common among American white people.

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[39] *Yam,* to eat. See below for a discussion of this word, which is commonly supposed to be of African origin.

[40] *Cf.* Shakespeare: "Nuncle Lear, Nuncle Lear."

n(g). [ha*ng*, morni*ng*][41] This sound, when final and unstressed, as in *evening*, *running*, etc., is always *n* in the dialect. This is so thoroughly in accord with uncultivated white usage in this country that I mention it only to illustrate the point that the Negro pronunciation is not the cause of the white pronunciation. Both are of English origin. Wright says, "Final unstressed *ng* has generally become *n* in all the dialects, *evenin*(g), *farthin*(g), *mornin*(g), *sendin*(g), and similarly in all present participles and verbal nouns in *ing*."[42] Wright lists eleven pronunciations of *morning*, all ending in *n*; thirteen of *evening*, all ending in *n*; etc.

p, q. These consonants are the same in Gullah as in the standard language.[43]

r. No consonant shows better the effect of English dialect speech upon the Negro than *r*. In the Gullah country, as in many other parts of this nation, the general rule is that *r* is seen and not heard. Initially, or following initial consonants, it is pronounced, of course, as in *race*, *rice*, *rock*, *crane*, *train*, *scratch*, etc.; it is admitted to some extent in words where it is surrounded by vowels and cannot very well be ignored, as in *very*, *weary*, etc.; it crops out as an excrescence here and there in some individual's speech, as in *calicro*, calico, *grano*, guano; otherwise it is heard only occasionally.[44]

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[41] This sound is not merely *n* + *g*, but is an elemental sound. When one says *evenin'*, he has not "dropped a final *g*" but has substituted one sound for another: *n* for *ng*.

[42] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 224.

[43] An exception for *p* is *Babtist* for Baptist, but this is common Southern pronunciation derived from English dialects. I recall that when I first saw the word *Baptist* printed, I was surprised to see a *p* in it.

[44] We usually think of *r* as being omitted by Southern whites and Negroes in words like *part*, *hurt*, *bird*, etc., but it would probably be more accurate to say that

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The use of *r* in the dialect correlates remarkably well with its use in southern English dialects. It is interesting to note here that, after speaking of the trilled *r* of Scotland, Ireland and Northumberland, Wright goes on to say:

> In south Pembroke, Gloucester, and parts of Hereford, Oxford, and in all the south and south-western dialects it is a reverted or retracted *r* formed by the under surface of the tip of the tongue being turned to the hard palate, and the trill being indistinct and less sharp than for the Scotch *r*. This *r* exercises a great influence upon a preceding vowel and causes a following *t, d, l, n* to become reverted, especially in the southwestern dialects. . . . With the exception of [Shetland and Orkney Islands, Scotland, Ireland, Northumberland, and small parts of Durham, Cumberland, and Westmoreland], medial *r* has entirely disappeared before a following consonant, generally with lengthening or diphthongization of the preceding vowel. . . . In the south midland, eastern, southern, and south-western dialects [final *r*] has become a mere voice-glide.[45]

s. A few words beginning with a consonant occasionally have an *s* prefixed, e. g., *squestion, squizzit* (*quizzit,* to question), *strance.* These forms were undoubtedly taken over from the English settlers, for this excrescent *s* was very common in England, according to Wright.[46]

Gonzales[47] reported several words (presumably from Edisto Island) in which initial *s* followed by a hard con-

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the *r* is formed in a different way from the trilled or burred *r*, for a little reflection will show any one who is familiar with the suppressed *r* that there is enough of the sound left to have a strong influence on the preceding vowel. For example, *bi(r)d* is not simply *bud*, *hu(r)t* is not simply *hut*. The difference is subtle and can hardly be represented without recourse to some phonetic scheme.

[45] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 218-19.

[46] See *E. D. G.*, p. 242. *Squench*, quench, *squizzit*, and others are listed in the *E. D. D.* (*English Dialect Dictionary*).

[47] See glossary in *The Black Border*, also Reed Smith, *Gullah*, p. 29.

sonant is dropped, as in (s)cratch, (s)corch, (s)tan', (s)tretch, (s)plash, etc. Such pronunciations are rare on St. Helena. There seems to be some tendency in English dialect to omit *s* in such words.[48] It might have been intensified, however, by the "baby talk" used by the English settlers in addressing slaves. The omission of *s* in words of this kind does not make them unintelligible, and, finding it unnecessary to pronounce the *s*, the Negro would tend to omit it.

In other positions *s* is the same as in standard English.[49] *Shr* in words like *shrimp, shrivel, shrub,* becomes *sr* (sometimes *sw: swimp*), but this is too common among whites to need comment.

t. Initial and medial *t* are generally the same as in standard English, although, in common with rustic white speech in England and America, the *t* in a few words, as *tune, Tuesday,* becomes *ch*: *chune, Chuesday*; the *tt* in *little* sometimes disappears; in a few other words, such as *bottle, bottom,* etc., it is sometimes heard as *d*; and the *tch* sound in creature is *t: critter* or *creatter.*

Final *t* after voiceless consonants is never heard. Thus *fas', las', trus', fac', temp', kep', nex',* etc.[50] An excrescent *t* is sometimes heard,[51] e. g., *suhmunt,* sermon, *suddent,* sudden, *giraft,* giraffe, *varmint,* vermin.[52]

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[48] See, e.g., *cramble,* scramble, *plash,* splash, etc., in *E. D. D. Cf.* Longfellow: "Far below him plashed the water."

[49] Exceptions: the final *s* sound in *chemise* is omitted *(shimmy),* but this is characteristic of nine-tenths of Americans; the final *s* in *shoes* is sometimes *sh,* likewise *licorish* for *licorice,* both of these being of direct English descent; the *s* in *mouse* is often softened to *z (mouz),* of southwestern English dialect descent. See Wright, *E. D. G.,* p. 245.

[50] Wright, *E. D. G.,* p. 230, mentions this identical tendency in English dialects. Most of these are still found in rustic white speech.

[51] Same true in English dialects. *Cf.* Wright, *E. D. G.,* p. 231.

[52] This is a very common corruption in both England and America.

194 *th.* Voiced *th* [*th*en, *th*ere, ra*th*er], whether initial, medial, or final, is always *d* in the dialect. Thus *den*, then, *dere*, there, *dem*, them, *odduh*, other, *wid*, with.

Voiceless *th* [*th*in, *th*under, pa*th*] *becomes t.* Thus *t'under*, thunder, *paht*, path, *t'ick*, thick, *t'ief*, thief, *trute*, truth. While there is a possible African influence[83] in this refusal of the Negro to pronounce the English *th* sounds, it is not at all impossible that he took over this habit from the Englishmen with whom he came in contact in America. Wright records that *this*, *that*, *them*, etc., were called *dis*, *dat*, *dem*, in Shetland and Orkney Islands, Pembroke, Kent, and Sussex.[84] *Bother* was pronounced *bodder* in Cumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Sussex; *three* was either *dree* or *t'ree* in parts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Hereford, Gloucester, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wright, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Shetland and Orkney Islands; and so on for various other words.

v. This consonant is rarely heard where it belongs. Jones listed only two words[85] with initial *v* in his glossary, Whaley listed two,[86] and Gonzales none. In most words *v* becomes *w*: *wine*, vine, *woice*, voice, *wisitor*, visitor, *puhwide*, provide, etc. In certain other words, it becomes *b*: *fibe*, *grabe*, *hebben*, for five, grave, heaven. In some cases, both the *b* and *w* forms exist: *bery* and *wery*, very, *Benus* and *Wenus*, Venus, *billage* and *willage*, village, etc. The change of *v* to *w* was common in England.

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[83] This will be discussed further in the section, "African Influence."

[84] *E. D. G.*, p. 237. These pronunciations are obsolescent now in Pembroke and Kent; two hundred years ago they probably had a wider diffusion than at present.

[85] *Vise*, advise; *vive*, revive.

[86] *Vestmunt*, vest, clothes; *vibrushun*, vibration.

Wright says, "Initial and medial *v* has become *w* in middle Buckingham, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, east Sussex. . . ."[57] The low-country Negro, therefore, probably rarely heard a *v* sound, and he adopted the *w* as he heard it used by the white people.

As for the change of *v* to *b*, it may appear at first glance that there is some African influence operating, or some psychological law of language working. The explanation is simple, however. In a few words, the English did not change *v* to *w*, but changed *v* to *b* "through the influence of a following *l* or *n*."[58] The chief words of this kind were ***navel, eleven, seven, even, evening, heaven, oven***.[59] This change was common throughout the midland, southern, and southwestern dialects.

w. As in the English dialects, initial *w* is omitted in a few words, e. g., *'oman*, woman, *'ood*, wood, etc. In a few instances I heard a distinct *v* for initial *w* or *wh*: ***Villie***, Willie, ***vink***, wink, ***v'eel***, wheel,[60] and in other cases there was a sort of hybrid *v-w* sound.[61] Medial and final *w* are the same as in standard English, except that medial *w* is

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[57] *E. D. G.*, p. 227.

[58] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 226.

[59] *Rebel*, revel, *ribbit*, rivet, and other examples may be found in the *E. D. D.*

[60] Bennett recorded *vax* for *wax*. Mrs. Parsons recorded several instances of *v* for *w*. This brings up the question as to whether *v* for *w* ever occurred in England. Was Dickens merely using literary license when he wrote "Sam Veller," etc? Wright says, "There are no examples in the dialect of initial *w* being changed to *v* before a following vowel." *E. D. G.*, p. 207. Halliwell (*Provincial Dialects*, p. 66) says of Middlesex, however, "The language of the lower orders of the metropolis is pictured very faithfully in the works of Mr. Dickens. The interchange of *v* and *w* is a leading characteristic." Of Kent: "The interchange of *v* and *w* is common here as well as in the metropolis." P. 53. Such an interchange probably did exist in the London district.

[61] This sound may be produced by attempting to say *v* with the lips and tongue in the *w* position. The upper teeth must not quite touch the lower lip. The sound is practically a bi-labial *v*. It is relatively rare, and when it occurs it probably represents a transition from the *v* to the *w* form.

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194 missing in such words as *backwards*, *always*, *towards*.[62] A *w* has been inserted in a few words, e. g., *gwine*, going, *quile*, coil, *swinge*, singe, sometimes *bwile*, boil, etc. This evidently was taken over from English dialect, as this tendency was found in the south midland, south, and southwest dialects.[63]

Initial *wh* [voiceless, as in *wh*ether, *wh*ite] is *w* in the Gullah, as it is in English dialect and in some parts of the United States among whites. Thus *w'ile*, while, *w'ite*, white, *w'eat*, wheat, etc.[64]

x. This consonant does not differ from *x* in the standard language.

y. [German and Old English *j*]. An initial *y* occurs in the dialect pronunciation of many words beginning with a vowel, as *yahm* for arm, *yeah* for ear, *yeye* for eye, *yent* for ent or ain't, etc.[65]

A medial *y* occurs after a consonant in many words: *cyaa't*, cart, *gyaa'den*, garden, *gyap*, gap, etc. This tendency was, and still is, very strong in England,[66] and is one of the ear-marks of the Charleston and other South Carolina low-country aristocratic speech today.

z. This consonant is the same as in standard English, except that in words like *measure* and *pleasure*, the *z* sound is sometimes pronounced like the *dg* in bridge.

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[62] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 211.

[63] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 210-11.

[64] *Cf.* Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 209, also index under various *wh* words.

[65] The same tendency was very common in England. See Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 212-13, also index. For example, *arm* had an initial *y* in Isle of Wight, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset; *ear* in Lancashire, Oxford, Sussex, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, etc.

[66] For example, Wright (*E. D. G.*, p. 214), records *cart* with *y* in Lancashire, Stafford, Derby, Gloucester, Oxford, and Hertford; *care* with *y* in Caithness, Westmoreland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Stafford, Derby, Lincoln, Oxford, Norfolk, etc.

Thus *medguh, pledguh, treadguh,* etc., pronunciations which are not uncommon among illiterate white people. 194

Loss of Syllables

As Professor Smith says, "Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped as *at-, o-, ap-, re-, op-, ad-, ex-, dis-, as-, con-,* etc." Thus *'ten'* (attend, intend), *'pinion* (opinion), *'spose* (suppose, expose), *'spise* (despise), *'stonish* (astonish), and so on through dozens of words. In addition, medial syllables are often lost, as in *diffunce* (difference), *eb'ry* (every), *gen'ly* (generally), etc.[67] Now it is easy to assume that the Negro dropped such syllables because of some natural tendency toward economy of vocalization, but it is doubtful whether this is the true explanation. According to Wright, such pronunciations as *'bout* (about), *'quaint* (acquaint), *'gree* (agree), *'low* (allow), *'cause* (because), *'sturb* (disturb), *'lev'n, 'leb'm* (eleven), *'cept* (except), *'casion* (occasion), *'tice* (entice), *comp'ny* (company), *diff'ent* (different), *gen'ral* (general), etc., were very frequent in the English dialects.[68] The Negro probably omits little that was not omitted in the patterns set by his English associates in the early days in the South Carolina low-country. 194 193

Combinations

The phonology of the dialect is further affected by the combinational process, by which the Negro utters several words as a single vocable, thus making it inevitable 194 that many syllables do not receive their proper stress. A few examples are: *deseyuh* (these here), *disyuh* (this here), *debbilubuh* (devil of a), *dunkyuh* (don't care), *sump'n'nurruh* (something or other), *swaytogawd* (swear to God), *tummuch* (too much), *wuffuh* (what for), *wus'n ebbuh* (worse than ever), *sukka* (such a), *lukka* (like a), etc. It may be put down as a general rule that any short vocable, especially a pronoun or a preposition, in an unemphatic position, will be slurred over and connected with the preceding or the following word. Thus *here* is often *yuh*, *too* or *to* is *tuh*, *of* is *uh* or *ub*, *them* is *'um*. The latter, being used for *them*, *him*, *her*, *it*, etc., is glued to the verb of which it is the object. Thus *do-um* (do it, etc.), *see-um* or *shum* (see it, them, etc.), *gittum*, (get them, etc.), *t'ief-um* (thieve them, etc.).

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[67] There are of course many vocalic *m's* and *n's*, as in *bott'm* (bottom), *heav'n* (heaven), *bac'n* (bacon), *happ'n* (happen), etc., but these are so common among white people that I do not mention them as Gullah characteristics.

[68] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 204-5. Such pronunciations as *monsus* (monstrous), *sarteny* (certainly), *sum'dy* (somebody) etc., will be found in specimens of English dialect in the works of Halliwell, Wright, Barnes, Skeat, and others.

This tendency is of course not peculiar to Gullah, but it is more pronounced in that dialect than in any other American dialect. It is found in the speech of uneducated white people and to some extent among well educated people. It is likely that two hundred years ago the English peasantry in the low-country ran their words together to about the same extent as the Gullah speakers do now. Such forms as *wunna* (was not), *nammit* (noon meat), *adunnamany* (I don't know how many), etc., were and still are used in southern England.[69]

Other Phonological Deviations

In addition to the more or less regular deviations from the standard phonology which have been pointed out, there are instances of pronunciations which might be called corruptions or mutilations. Such pronunciations as the following will be heard occasionally: ***adswocate*** (advocate), ***bactize*** (baptize), ***bidout*** (without), ***cumposhashum*** (conversation), ***dimmycrack*** (Democrat), ***disgustuss*** (disgusting), ***fench*** (fence), ***muskick*** (musket) ***ruggidge*** (rugged), ***shoesh*** (shoes), ***stustifficate*** (certificate), etc. Some pronunciations of this kind are descended from English dialect, some represent the minimum of accuracy which it was necessary for the Negro to achieve in order to make himself understood, and others are individual idiosyncrasies of the sort that are likely to appear in dialect anywhere. 194

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[69] See Skeat, *English Dialects*, pp. 128, 130, 131, etc.

GULLAH GRAMMAR

The Gullah grammar is merely simplified English grammar. Distinctions of person, number, gender, case, and tense have all been reduced to the minimum. Some of the features of Gullah grammar were copied directly from English dialect, and the rest seems easily explained on the basis of the simplified or "baby talk" type of speech used by the whites in teaching the raw slaves to understand English. The significant points of the Gullah grammar may be summarized briefly as follows. Only those particulars in which the dialect deviates from the standard language will be mentioned. 193 [191] [177] [128]

Nouns

As a rule the singular of a noun does duty for the plural. "Duh roostuh crow" may mean one rooster or ten roosters or any number of roosters. A sack of potatoes weighs fifty *pound*, a year has twelve *mont'*. However, *mens* is used for the plural of man, crabs are *crabbies*, while the ox is *oxin* and more than one is *two ox*, *t'ree* *ox*, etc. Sometimes a plural creeps in unexpectedly, as in a "five-dolluhs" hat, a "two-bits" collar, etc.[70]

The sign of the genitive is nearly always omitted. Thus "'e fadduh house" means "his (or her) father's house;" "dem brudduh wife" is "their brother's wife;" "Buh Wolf pig" is "Buh Wolf's pig," etc.[71] The thing possessed is sometimes widely separated from the possessor. "Is that your goat?" I asked a man. "No suh, dat de man what lib obuh dere een dat nex' house goat."[72]

Judging from the pronouns used, most inanimate objects are personified[73] and are masculine, being referred to as *he*.

Adjectives and Adverbs

Most adjectives are the same as in the standard language. Occasionally an ending is corrupted, as *brinly* (brindled), *speckly* (speckled), *cackly* (cackling), etc.

A few irregular forms, such as *worser*, *worsest*, *more better*, *morest*, *more longer*, and the like, occur in the comparison of adjectives.[74]

Pronouns

The nominative and objective forms of the personal pronouns are often reversed. "Him sent dis to we," "me said to he," "him an' me went," "dem got a long way to go to ketch up wid he," etc. *Um* is a sort of catch-all, serving for *her, it, him, them,* except in emphatic positions. Thus, "'e got 'um" may mean that he, she, or it got or gets it, him, her or them. This confusion of pronouns is not a Negro invention, nor does it reflect an inability on his part to master English pronouns. He simply copied the pattern which was set for him.[75]

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[70] For double plurals and use of singular for plural in English dialects, see Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 263-64.

[71] *Cf.* English dialect: "The Queen Cousin," "My father boots," etc., Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 265. A Lancashire magistrate is said to have asked a witness, "Was it your brother dog?" Wright, *Rustic Speech*, p. 144.

[72] This form, with the genitival *s*, of course, is still common in this country. *Cf.*, also English dialect, "I've just seen Tim Dutton him as went to America's wife," etc. Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 265.

[73] Same widely true in English dialects. *Cf. E. D. G.*, p. 265.

[74] *Cf. E. D. G.*, pp. 267-69.

You, singular and plural, is nearly always *oona, woona,* or *yoona:* "oona gwine?" "oona help we," "I tell oona duh trut'," etc. The origin of *oona* is not clear. There seems to be no record of any such pronunciation of *you* in English dialect. It may be of African origin.[76]

The masculine pronouns are used almost exclusively. "'E go wid 'e 'usban' " means "she goes (is going, went) with her husband." "My wife, 'e yent feel so well," "My daughtuh, 'e los' 'e (or him) pig," etc. If the feminine is used, it is usually in the wrong place, as when a Negro refers to his nephew, his ox, or his bull as *she.* This confusion of genders had its basis in the peasant English speech. *He* was widely used in England for inanimate objects and feminine animals.[77] It used to be a common saying that in Hampshire "everything is called *he* except a tom-cat which is called *she.*"[78]

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[75] *Cf. E. D. G.*, pp. 270-73. "In all the dialects of Scotland and England the objective form of the personal pronoun is used for the nominative. . . . In all the dialects of the south-midland, eastern, southern, and south-western counties the nominative of the personal pronoun is used as the emphatic form of the objective case." Thus, "it was her that did it," "him and me did it," "Jack and us went together." See also Halliwell's *Historical Sketch of the Provincial Dialects of England* for numerous examples. In Worcestershire, for example, they said, "her's going for a walk with she." The unstressed form of *him* was *un* or 'im, of *her, eh* or *uh,* of *them, um* or *'em,* in many of the dialects.

[76] See below, under African words.

[77] *E. D. G.*, p. 272. In Thomas Wright's *Dict. of Obsolete and Provincial English,* the meanings *they* and *she* are listed under *he.*

[78] Halliwell, *Prov. Dial.*, p. 43.

It will have been noticed already that the possessive pronouns are not common in Gullah. "His boat" is represented by "'e boat" or "him boat." "Our house" is "we house" or "us house." Disjunctively we have *him-own, we-own, you-own, dem-own*, etc. This way of expressing the possessive by means of the nominative or objective personal pronouns was widespread in the English dialects.[79]

The usual forms of the reflexive pronouns are *'ese'f, deyse'f* (sometimes *demse'f*), *myse'f* and *wese'f*. These correspond to the reflexives used in many of the midland and southern counties in England.[80]

The demonstratives besides *dis, dat*, and *dese*, are *disyuh*[81] (this here), *da' deh*[82] (that there), *dese* (these), *dese yuh*[83] (these here), *dem* (them, used for those), *dem deh*[84] (them there). *Those* is never heard among the dialect speakers. As in the English dialects, *that* is used adverbially with the meaning *to such an extent*,[85] as "'e dat 'fraid him oxin gwine die, 'e sell 'um cheap."

Wuh (what, that) is the relative pronoun most used. *Who*, as a relative, is seldom used, *whom* is never used. *Which* is sometimes heard, but is usually in a clumsy construction, as "de nine kitten, which all dem eye ent open yet."

[79] *E. D. G.*, p. 274.

[80] *E. D. G.*, p. 276.

[81] "*This here* . . . general in England." *E. D. G.*, p. 277.

[82] "*That there*, general in England; a second *there* is often added." *E. D. G.*, p. 277.

[83] *These here*, common in Midland and Southern England. *E. D. G.*, p. 279.

[84] "*Those* is seldom or never heard in genuine dialect speech. Its place is supplied by: (1) *Them* . . . (2) *Them there*." *E. D. G.*, p. 279.

[85] *Cf. E. D. G.*, p. 278.

Verbs

Verbal endings are cut to the minimum in Gullah. With scarcely any exception one form of a verb serves for all tenses. "'E run" means that he, she, or it *ran*, *has run*, *runs*, *is running*, and sometimes *will run*. The last, however, would as a rule be expressed by "'e gwine run." An air of finality is lent by "'e done run,"[86] and sometimes the present action of running is "'e duh run" (he does run).

When compound forms for the past are used, the verb stem remains the same, but it is preceded by *uh*, a survival from English dialects still commonly heard among white Americans. Thus the Negro would say, "if I had *uh hit* um," "'e been *uh laugh* at me," etc.[87]

There are a few remnants of the old *th* ending in the third person singular, as in "w'en de win' blowet' " (bloweth), owing their perpetuation largely to Biblical usage. *Fuh* (for) is sometimes used as the sign of the infinitive: "'E haffuh hab wife fuh cook fuhr'um, enty?"[88]

Adjectives and nouns are freely converted into verbs. "'E want a mortgage on sometin' what won't *dead*." "De young gal *pledjuh* (pleasure) heself," "Look out! De plank gwine uh *broke*." Him gwine uh *foolish* aroun'." "Me *happy* mese'f wid um." This trait survives in Eng-

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[86] An old man to whom ideas of time were vague was trying to tell how long his daughter had been away from St. Helena: "Oh, 'e *been been* gone."

[87] These simplified verb forms were due in part to the fact that the white settlers simplified their speech as much as possible in dealing with the slaves. Some of these characteristics, however, were regularly found in English dialects. See *E. D. G.*, pp. 281-98. For example, the endings *s* and *es* in the third person singular were often omitted in the south midland, eastern, and southern dialects. The use of the form with *do (he does love* for *he loves)* was common in the southwestern dialects.

[88] *Cf. E. D. G.*, p. 298.

193 land, and it has been observed especially among the whites of our Appalachians and Ozarks.

There are two or three unusual verb forms used in the dialect. *Hear* is *yerry* or *yeddy*. *See*, plus its object, has become *shum*, meaning see (sees, saw), it, him, her, them, etc. The former is probably derived with little change from the English dialect pronunciation of *hear, heard*, as *year, yeard*.[89] Likewise *see*, being nearly always followed by its object, which was usually *um*, was transformed in the rapid Gullah speech to *shum*.

Several English dialect forms like *pit* (put) and *remoan* (remove) survive in the Gullah, besides a number of archaic meanings of certain verbs.[90]

Conjunctions

In addition to the standard uses, the following peculiarities occur. *Than* is often expressed by *nuh* (nor), as it was, in fact still is, in England. Thus "Tek care mo' bettuh nuh be sorry" (to take care is better than to be sorry). *And* is also sometimes *nuh*, as in "you nuh me" (you and I).

Numerals, Etc.

802 *Twice, second, third*, etc., are rarely heard among the older dialect speakers, who prefer *two, two-time*, etc. "De t'ree (third) Sunday in November," "Now, in de two place" (second place), "Uh tol' 'um two-time" (twice), "Muh wife 'e been sick now strike de two mont'." *Both* is always *all-two*.[91] "Buh Rabbit en Buh Wolf all-

[89] Some verbs had an *l* or *y* ending in England, e. g., *look* was sometimes *looky*, a form surviving in America.

[90] See the list of archaic and provincial usages given below.

[91] A rare English usage, heard nowhere in this country now except in the Gullah dialect. Compare French, *tous les deux*.

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two went fuh t'ief a cow," "Buh Lion nyam (ate) um 'all-two," etc. When referring to a particular month, the speaker says "de June mont'," "de Augus' mont'," etc. 802

Miscellaneous

There are many additional points which might be mentioned, but most of them are not particularly significant. However, there is one other feature of the grammar which is interesting and is characteristic of Gullah, namely, the interrogative *enty*. *Ain't* is usually *ent* in the dialect, and it is used just as white people use it. But the Negro has generalized *ain't it*, *ain't he*, etc., and has made *enty*, which he uses exactly like the French *n'est-ce-pas* and the German *nichtwahr*. Thus "'e gwine rain, enty?" "Oonah come tomorrow, enty?" "Dem was good apples, enty?" etc. The source of *enty* was the *ent*, *int*, *yent*, *yunt*, etc., which the English dialect speakers used for *isn't*. Since this word when used interrogatively was followed more frequently by *'e* (he) or *it* than any other words, the Negro really did not have to do much to the English dialect usage to achieve *enty*.[92] 193

VOCABULARY

Analysis of Gonzales' Glossary

It may seem that the English dialect paternity of Gullah has been unduly emphasized, but such is not the case. Indeed, it probably played an even larger part in the development of Gullah than has been indicated in this brief sketch. 177 19

A broad view of the nature of the Gullah vocabulary 192

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[92] See *E. D. G.*, pp. 244, 273.

192 may be obtained by a statistical analysis of the largest published glossary available. Gonzales[93] has listed nearly 2,000 of the words most commonly used in the dialect in the Edisto Island region. If these words be divided arbitrarily into appropriate classes, the following distribution results:[94]

I.	Standard English words pronounced in standard way or as in English dialect of 18th century . . .	92 per cent
II.	Corruptions and mutilations of standard English words (some of these corruptions are no doubt of English dialect origin)	6 per cent
III.	Archaic and obsolescent English words	2 per cent
IV.	African words	Less than 0.5 per cent

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A Partial List of Archaic and Provincial English Usages Surviving in the Dialect[95]

192 The following list includes the most common archaic and provincial English words found in the dialect. A prolonged study would reveal several others, perhaps, but these are the most common. Few, if any, of these, however, occur exclusively in the Gullah, for in various other parts of this country many of these words survive either among Negroes or white people or both. Some are not used on St. Helena, as far as I can ascertain. The list is composed of words not now in general use, and words in general use but having an archaic meaning in the Gullah.

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[93] *The Black Border*, Glossary, pp. 287-340.

[94] This distribution also holds good for Whaley's glossary of 1,500 words. Jones' glossary is relatively short, and most of his words are found in Gonzales' list.

[113] [95] For tracing the paternity of various Gullah words, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, Wright's *Provincial Dictionary*, Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, and the *N. E. D. (New English Dictionary)* are invaluable.

All two, both. Compare French, *tous les deux*.

Arey, either (*Nary*, neither). Also used extensively by illiterate Negroes and whites elsewhere.

Aunt, a term of respect for old people, as in English dialect. Usually pronounced *ant*. See *Uncle*.

Aw, used as a sort of exclamation meaning "for true," similar to the meaning "yes," which it had in English dialect.

Ax, ask. Not a Negroism, but used elsewhere, especially by the Southern white mountain people. Chaucer used *ax*, and it is still used in some of the English dialects. *Cf.* Old English, *acsian*, *axian*, etc.

Balmoral skirt, a kind of petticoat worn during Queen Victoria's reign.

Blan, a corruption of *belong*. *Belong*, in the sense of *ought*, is quite common among white people in the South Atlantic States. "I belong to be there by this time," "That costs more than it belongs to," etc. In the Gullah *belong* has this meaning but it also retains another meaning from English dialect, namely, to be accustomed to. In the past tense this is like "used to": "Him an' me blan go huntin' togedder."

Brawtus (sometimes spelled *broadus* or *brotus*), something extra, thrown in for good measure. "Take dat fuh brawtus," says a Negro mother as she applies a final and extra lick of the switch to her child's legs. It is strange that there should still be doubt as to the English paternity of *brawtus*, but there are still some who consider it African. The archaic English *brotts*, fragments, leavings, etc., seems to offer an explanation, although some are not satisfied with this.[98] If this is insufficient, there is the related word, *brotta*, a Lancashire word which many students have overlooked in *The English Dialect Dictionary*, meaning "a few drops, a small quantity, a little in addition." Add the dialect tendency to pluralize words of this kind and we have *brottas*, having the same meaning as *brawtus* used by the Gullah and other American Negroes.

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[98] Professor Robert A. Law, of the University of Texas, wrote in *Texas and Southwestern Folklore*, 1927, p. 120: "I . . . consider it much more likely . . . that here we have another African word."

Chance, a quantity, a considerable amount. "I raised a right good chance o' potatoes," "I had a plenty to eat fuh suppuh, a good chance," etc.

Coz, cuz, cuz'n, etc., cousin, used as a form of address, as in Shakespeare's day.

Find, to supply with provisions, to keep one in victuals, etc.

Fo'punce chicken (also *seb'npunce chicken*), used to describe chickens of certain sizes.

Foreigner, anyone born outside St. Helena Island or whatever community the speaker lives in. Exactly the old Kent and Sussex usage: "In some parts of Kent all born in another parish are still called foreigners." *Prov. Dict.*, also *N. E. D.*

Frail, to beat, strike, whip. Also used elsewhere in the South by whites and N[redacted]. It originated in England from *flail* by the process of dissimilation.[96]

Gaum (or *gorm*), to smear one's face with grease, victuals, etc.

Gall (*gaul* in some glossaries), swamp. The *E. D. D.* lists as one meaning of *gall*, "wet, spongy land." It also lists *gault*, "wet, boggy land."

Gunjuh, ginger or molasses cookie.

Graff, to grab, grasp, grapple, seize.

Hippo, ipecac. Until rather recently this was in common use for ipecac, the full name of which is hippocachuana or hippechachuana. In a medical book published in this country as late as 1848, *hippo* appeared as the ordinary term for ipecac.[97]

Killick, an anchor of stone.

Larging, swaggering, putting on airs, etc. This may be from *enlarging*, or from the same *larging* used in England to mean "spending the money given in largess." The Cumberland, "He's gone a-larging," is pretty close to the Gullah usage. See *E. D. D.*

Limous (in the expression *limous cooter*), mud, muddy.

Make your manners, used by the Negroes as it was in England:

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[96] See *E. D. G.*, §252.

[97] J. Hume Simons, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine*, Charleston, S. C., 1848.

"A command to a child to touch his hat or curtsey in the presence of superiors." Wright, *Prov. Dict.*

Meet, to find, to experience, to observe the existence of, etc. "Did oona meet a good time?" "I ain't meet dem t'ings w'en I been a boy." Also used by some of the white people of the low country.

Mought, may, might. Still heard also in the South among white people.

Nor, than. "Bettuh nuh" means "better than."

Nyam, to eat. Possibly an African word, but it has long been known in England. See below under *African Words.*

One, in the sense of alone, singly: "Me one, Lawd," means "I alone, Lord." Also used in place of the indefinite article. "Once deh been one mahn what had one fine cow."

Peruse, to saunter, walk leisurely; also to examine. The *E. D. D.* records a Herefordshire usage, meaning "to explore the fields or woods."

Piggin, a small wooden pail with one stave extended to serve as a handle.

Pit, put, all tenses.

Poke, sack, bag.

Pure, in the sense of fully, exceedingly, absolutely. "De pyo' nuttin' " is "absolutely nothing." "He pyo' love de gal."

Quills, pipes or stalks of reed, cane, etc.

Quizzett (sometimes *squizzet*), to quiz, to question closely. From the English dialectic *quiset* or *quisit,* "to ask prying questions," which is derived from the old verb *inquisite,* to inquire into.

Remoan, to remove. A good English dialect usage.

Shote, or *shoat,* a pig. Widely used in the South.

Soon, early, quick, etc. "A soon boat" is an early boat, "a soon man" is an alert, quick, man.

Sparrowgrass, asparagus. Sometimes thought to be a Negro corruption, but it is a well-known instance of popular etymology which came from England and is still to be found among illiterate Americans.

Start-naked, stark-naked. Professor Smith listed this with the

192 comment, "It is barely possible (but highly improbable) that *staa't* goes back to the older 'start' (steort), tail." But the *N. E. D.* states that *stark-naked* is an alteration of the older *start-naked*, i. e., *tail-naked*, and lists various usages from the 13th century down to recent times. *Start-naked* would then seem to be a direct descendant of the Anglo-Saxon *steort* after all.

Stepney, poverty, privation. "To keep ol' stepney from de do'," is to keep the wolf from the door. Not heard on St. Helena. Smith lists this word as possibly African, which is doubtful. *Stepney* is used in a restricted area,[97] and it might represent an English usage which has never been noted in any dialect collection. The following is ventured as a possible explanation of the origin of the usage. *Stepney* is the name of an east London parish in which squalor and poverty prevail. *(Ency. Brit.)* *Stepney* or *stipone*, "a kind of sweet compound liquor drunk in some ill places in London in the summer time," (See Grose, *Classical Dict.*, and Wright, *Prov. Dict.*) probably took its name from the parish (See *N. E. D.*). It appears from this that *stepney* was associated with a low condition. Add to this the fact that it is used synonymously with *wolf* in "keep the wolf from de do'," and its English derivation seems fairly certain.

Swinge, to singe. Widely used by Negroes and by the white mountain people. Still in use in various parts of England.

Swanga (or *swonga)*, noun: swagger, a dashing air; adj.: swaggering, boastful, etc. This word has been considered African by certain writers, but it is quite possibly a dialect pronunciation of English *swank* or *swanky*, the latter being used as both noun and adjective with meanings that correspond to those of *swanga*, namely, "a strapping fellow" and "swaggering." (*Prov. Dict.* or *E. D. D.*). A parallel is found in the Gullah *teng* or *tang* for *thank*.

[804] *Task*, a survival of the plantation daily task of a quarter of an acre for each hand. It is also used as a linear measure (105 feet).

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[97] Since this was written Arthur Palmer Hudson has informed me that *stepney* is known in Mississippi.

The Negro speaks of planting two *tas'* of potatoes, or judges that the river is about a *tas'* wide.

Titty (or tittuh), sister.

Toad, a young female dog.

Too, very. "I *too* sorry you gwine." "Lawd, dat gatuh *too* beeg!" exclaimed a Negro who was rowing me across the Edisto when he saw a large alligator near the boat. Also used in this sense by white people in the low country.

Tote, to carry.[98] This word, which is still widely used in the United States, has been the cause of much controversy. Some have attributed it to the Negro, others to the Indian. The English derivation seems so simple that it is not necessary to look elsewhere. In the South, where this word seems to have been used first in this country, *tote* means not merely to carry, but it implies "hefting," supporting or carrying something heavy. When *tote* began to get spread about by newspapers and periodicals, it was taken up by many people who did not appreciate its correct usage, and soon we were *toting* such light objects as books, papers, pistols, etc. This extension of the meaning of *tote* explains the reluctance of some scholars to accept an English derivation.

Totian, an Anglo-Saxon verb, has survived in England in various shades of meaning, the most common of which is to peep, to look out. Hence *tot hill*, a lookout place. *Tolt*, from Latin *tolle*,[99] to lift or remove, is probably the immediate precursor of our *tote* if not identical with it. The *E. D. D.* lists as one of the meanings of *tolt*, "to tilt, to raise up," cites a Warwickshire example, "Tolt it up a bit," and states that *tolt* is also

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[98] The earliest written use of *tote* found in the U. S. is in a Virginia manuscript, 1677: "They were by Beverly comanded to go to work, fall trees and mawl and toat railes." Quoted in B. W. Green's *Virginia Word-Book*, also in *New English Dictionary*.

It is interesting to observe that in a grammar written by Rev. Brantley York (3rd ed., 1862) and used locally in North Carolina, "tote the wood" was listed as an Irish inaccuracy for "carry the wood" in a list of New England, Dutch, Irish, and general colloquial inaccuracies.

[99] *Tolt* is the name of a writ by which proceedings were removed or "lifted" [illegible] County Court. See any good law dictionary.

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pronounced *to't*. In Northampton *toddy* meant heavy or weighty. It seems likely that in some part of England *tote* was acquiring the sense of hefting or carrying a weighty object about the time of the settlement of America, and that Negroes and others not familiar with the restricted meaning of the word, enlarged its meaning to its present American form.

Touch, small amount, "a little bit." "Leave me a leetle tetch o' dat pie." "'E got a tetch o' de fevuh." Not exclusively Gullah.

To that, to that extent, so much that, etc. "If you want it to dat," if you want it that much.

Uncle, a term of respect for old men.

Use, to frequent or roam over a certain area, used especially of game, cattle, etc. Used by Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, and others. Heard occasionally among whites in the South Atlantic States.

Yowe, ewe.

Two other words might be mentioned here, one derived from French, the other from the West Indian by way of Spanish. *Bateau*, a flat-bottomed row-boat, is much used in the Gullah. This word was introduced by the French Huguenots, who were an important factor in the settlement of South Carolina and Georgia. It also survives in other parts of this continent, especially in Louisiana and in the French portion of Canada. Another type of boat, the dug-out, is called *piragua*, pronounced *pattyauguh* by the Negroes. This came from a West Indian word,[100] which the Spanish have adopted in the form [194] of *piragua* or *pirogue*.[101] The dialect pronunciation no doubt arises from an attempt to imitate the Spanish trill on the *r*, which gives it a slight *t* sound.

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[100] Rochefort, in his *Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Iles de l'Amerique*, Rotterdam, 1658, mentioned vessels used by the Caribs, "qu'ils nomment *Canos* ou *Piraugues*," p. 347.

[101] Still used in Florida.

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THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN INFLUENCES IN THE DIALECT

Pronunciation and Syntax

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The supposition exists that there is considerable African influence in the American Negro's pronunciation of English. In his *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel comments upon the characteristics of African languages and their possible effects upon the speech of the Negro in America. Speaking of a Negro whose song he had analyzed, he says, "He did not pronounce the [r] by our standard. The lips were brought together more nearly like [w]. Here is an indication of the trouble the colored man encounters with English consonants."[102] Again, having pointed out that in African languages every consonant is followed by its vowel, so that combinations of consonants cannot take place, Metfessel remarks, "So today, even when there are two consonants ending an English syllable, the Negro leaves out one, or even both when they are not necessary to convey the meaning."[103]

The same author points to other examples of African influence. In the phrase "Mount Zion," he shows that a singer carried over the *t* of *mount* and gave it to *zi* in *zion*. "This," he says, "is probably a carry-over from the African languages of the Negro."[104] Further, "The use of the vowel-ending syllable in African languages may have something to do with the presence of the enclitic which is written as *-a-*. As an example, Odell Walker sang *which-a-way* for *which way*."[105] Again, "The [Negro's] syllable divisions . . . do not always follow the authorized dictionary usage. Words like *nu-thin'*, . . .

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[102] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 85.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

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194 *cros-ses*, . . . *hea-ven*, . . . *Mo-ses*, . . . *hea-vy*, . . .
177 and *li-vin'* or *di-vin'*, . . . have the consonant shifted to
178 the last syllable. There is room for speculation as to whether the vowel-ending syllable of African languages is not the cause of this transfer. Each of the first syllables above ends in a spoken vowel because of the shift of the consonant."[106] Further, "When the Negro makes an attempt at [b*i*te][107] instead of [*ah*] in speaking *I*, he sometimes uses the diphthongal characteristics found in Africa. That is, the [*ah*] is touched very lightly and [m*ee*t] is jerkily given the greater stress. . . . A still different response to the trouble the English diphthong gives the Negro is found in his sharp division of some syllables into two vowels, somewhat the same, as *da-ade* and *cha-ain*."[108]

Most of these types of examples which Metfessel mentions have already been taken care of in the sections on phonology and grammar.[109] Their English dialect origin is too patent to need any comment.

Coming more specifically to the Gullah dialect, one finds such statements as the following. "There is, too, the same confusion of gender and of number, based, I surmise, upon indifference in Africa to these linguistic dis-

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[106] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 140.

[107] That is, the sound of *i* in *bite*.—G. B. J.

[108] Metfessel, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[109] Except perhaps syllable division and diphthongs. As for syllabication, anyone acquainted with white dialect speech knows that numerous words are divided like the examples cited by Metfessel. The Negro pronunciation will in general follow the white pronunciation in a given area. To cite a single example, most of the people, white and Negro, in northern Texas where I was born said *plan-tation* (a proper division), but in the South Atlantic States whites and Negroes generally say *plant-ation*. As for diphthongs, I think that an analysis of specific cases shows that no general tendency prevails in Negro speech except the tendency to copy English dialect pronunciation. Under the various vowel sounds treated above will be found specific examples of diphthong pronunciation in the Gullah.

tinctions."[110] "With characteristic laziness, these Gullah 194
Negroes took short cuts to the ears of their auditors, using 177
as few words as possible. . . . Yet, notwithstanding this 178
economy of words, the Gullah sometimes incorporates into his speech grotesquely difficult and unnecessary English words; again, he takes unusual pains to transpose numbers and genders."[111] "They have reshaped perhaps 1700 words of our language by virtue of an unwritten but a very definite and vigorous law of their own tongue."[112]

In view of the various facts which have already been brought out in the discussion of phonology and grammar, it is doubtful if any of the Gullah traits mentioned in the foregoing quotations can be attributed to African influences. The Negro does not take "unusual pains" to do this or that. He has merely responded to the speech patterns with which he was confronted in the low-country by assimilating them in practically every detail. His speech comes nearer being a duplicate of eighteenth century English dialect to which he was exposed than the speech of some of our immigrant groups, say the Germans and Scandinavians, comes to being a copy of nineteenth century English.

About the only instance which might be considered as representing a direct and consistent African influence is found in the change of voiced and voiceless *th* to *d* and *t* respectively. Now, there are no *th* sounds in the west African languages,[113] and the Negro, on first hearing these sounds, would refer them to the sounds most like them in his own language, because, like the German learning Eng-

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[110] E. C. Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, Preface*, p. xx.

[111] Gonzales, *The Black Border*, p. 10. [112] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[113] In fact, with three or four exceptions, none in any of the African languages. See Koelle, *Polygotta Africana*.

194 lish, he would not possess vocal habits which would per-
177 mit him to reproduce such strange sounds off hand. He
would, therefore, fall back on the substitutes *d* and *t*. But
178 it is certain that in the English dialect with which the slave
came in contact in the South Carolina low country this same substitution already existed to a greater or lesser degree, and it is probable that Englishmen who ordinarily pronounced *th* used the *t* and *d* forms in addressing their Negroes. It is therefore impossible to decide whether the positive English pattern or the negative African trait was the primary factor. It is certainly unnecessary to turn to Africa for an explanation; yet it might be logically argued that, even if the English substitution of *d* and *t* for *th* had not existed, the Negro would have made a similar substitution.

Speed and Pitch Inflection

194 The Gullah speech flows very rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that the up-country Southern white man is astonished at the spectacle of Negroes who do not drawl. It is a question whether there is not some African influence here. It is certain that the English of Shakespeare's time was spoken more rapidly than typical white speech in the South today, so that the rapidity of Gullah speech might in part be accounted for on that basis, but the possibility remains that this may be due to the African mode of speaking.

One of the things which impresses a person on first hearing Gullah is the frequent and extensive change of pitch in the voice of the speaker. Whether this phenomenon is a survival of the musical accents used in the languages of West Africa or is descended from English dialect speech is a debatable question, but it is more probably 194 from the former. It is difficult to find anything specific on the musical intonations of eighteenth century English dialect speech. There are occasional references to the "Welsh cadence," the "Suffolk whine," the sing-song speech of East Anglia, etc., but probably none of these is quite the same as the Gullah intonations.

In English we use a stress accent to indicate the meaning 000 of words, and speech melody is secondary. We indicate different shades of meaning or types of emotion by changes in pitch, but the definitions of our words are the same regardless of pitch. In West Africa, on the other hand, there is no such thing as stress accent. There is musical or pitch accent.[114] The same word may mean two entirely different things, depending on whether the vowel is pitched high or low. Thus in Ewe "fu" with the *u* pitched low means *sea,* with the *u* pitched high means *bone.*[115] The combination "ele afi" may mean, "he is here," "he rubbed himself with ashes" or "he caught a mouse," depending on the pitch accent of the vowels.[116] Since musical accent was the very life of the West African 194 languages it is quite possible that the Negro carried over this language habit to some extent and that this accounts for the presence of the unusual pitch fluctuations heard among the old-time Gullah speakers. The survival of 194 such a habit did not interfere with the Negro's efficiency as 191 a speaker of English, for English accents are of the stress type, and any musical qualities remaining in his speech

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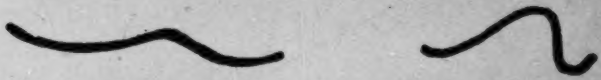
[114] For a discussion of these accents see Carl Meinhof, *An Introduction to the Study of African Languages* (tr. by A. Werner), p. 70 et. seq. See also *Les Langues du Monde* (ed. by Meillet and Cohen), part entitled, "Langues du Soudan et de la Guinée." (113)

[115] Meinhof, p. 77.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

194 [191] would be looked upon by the plantation owners as interesting embellishments.

The following graph is offered as an illustration of the differences in pitch range and speed between Gullah and ordinary Southern white English speech. It is merely suggestive. The pitch differences are only relative, since it would require the use of phonophotography to discover the absolute ranges. The left-hand graph represents white speech, the right-hand, Negro speech.



I SEC.
I don't know, mam.

0.6 SEC.
I ent know, mum.

African Words

174 192 Tracing the etymologies of words supposed to be of African origin is anything but an easy task. Perhaps this is why some of the English dictionaries refrain from giving specific etymologies, merely saying that a certain word is "African," or "of African origin," or even omitting these remarks. On the other hand, some writers have been too quick to attribute certain words to Africa. The mere discovery that a word is used in Africa and is different from any known modern English word is not always sufficient evidence that the word is African or that it was brought into English by Negroes. One must not forget that for more than a hundred years before the American slave trade began, European explorers and traders, especially the Portuguese and the Dutch, had contact with various parts of the African coast, and that this made pos-

sible (1) the borrowing of European words by the Africans and (2) the adoption of African words by the sailors and traders, the former process naturally being the more active of the two.

The history of a specific word will illustrate the difficulties involved. On St. Helena Island the word *malafee,*[117] meaning whiskey, is known to a few persons. It is supposedly of African origin. In fact, one dictionary[118] lists *malafu,* banana wine, and states that the word is African. Now, in medieval times there was a famous wine, malvesie, so named from Napoli di Malvasia, a town on the south coast of the Morea in Greece. It was sold in many ports, and its name was known in dozens of languages. In Dutch it was called *malvezy,* and this form came into English as *malvesie.* Chaucer mentioned "A Iubbe of Malveyse" in the *Canterbury Tales.*

The close relation between *f* and *v* made it easy for *malvesie* to become *malfesie,* and this form is very close to the St. Helena *malafee.* The name of the wine, however, was later changed in English from *malvesie* to *malmsey,* so that the old form was perpetuated only in oral language. It is certain that the old name was known to some of the English who colonized America. The word had also probably penetrated various African languages. The form *malafu,* attributed to Africa, has already been cited. In the Swahili (Zanzibar region) *m'lava* for drunk or intoxicated was reported in Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise,* 1846, p. 578.

[117] Noted by Mrs. Parsons in her *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands,* p. xxi. For a possible West Indian parallel, see her *Folk Tales of Andros Island, Bahamas,* p. 20: *Malantre.*

[118] Funk and Wagnalls. No specific African language is mentioned, however, and nothing said as to the extent of the use of the word in America.

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Here, then, is a word known in England in Chaucer's day cropping out in various places centuries later. Its appearance among the Negroes of the Sea Islands has given rise to the supposition that it is of African origin, which was certainly not the case. The question then arises, might it not at least be of African provenience? Perhaps so, since the African forms are different from the English form: *m'la'va, mal'afee, malafu'* (sometimes *mala'fu*) as compared to *mal'vesie*. Still *mal'afee* could be an English dialectal pronunciation of *malvesie* and might have entered this country with the English. At any rate, this word affords an excellent illustration of the need for caution in the study of strange words found in American Negro speech.[119]

No better evidence of the almost complete assimilation of English language habits by the Negro can be found than the scarcity of English words of African origin. Various words have been thought to be of African extraction, but many of them have turned out to be archaic English[120] or to be derived from Spanish or Portuguese.[121] There have been, of course, numerous individual survivals, that is, instances in which one person would continue to use a word or two of his native African language, but these have not obtained any diffusion and have about disappeared.

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[119] The dictionaries and grammars of various African languages have nearly all been compiled since 1800, and there had been plenty of time for the assimilation of European words by African tongues. I sometimes wonder if *buckra*, white man, said to be derived from the Efik of Old Calabar, where it meant a spirit or powerful being, might not have come from English *booger*, or a related word from English or some other European language.

[120] E.g., *brawtus*, meaning something extra, something in addition, thought by some to be African, is from English *bratts* or *brotta*. *Tote*, to carry, is also English. See list of archaisms above.

[121] E.g., *pickaniny* is from Portuguese, *pequeniño*.

For an African word to gain a regional diffusion in 192
this country, it either had to designate some object which 174
was familiar to a large proportion of the slaves but was new to the English settlers, or it had to be an expressive substitute for the name of some object already known to the white people. Words for certain plants like *okra*, *gumbo*, *yam*, *goober*, are examples of the first type. *Buckra*, for white man, and *cooter*, for terrapin, are examples of the second type.

Several words now generally conceded to be of Afri- 192
can origin were introduced to the white people in this country during slavery. The vegetable name, *okra*, is familiar to most people, its synonym, *gumbo*, a little less widely known; *yam* (potato) is in general use; *goober* (peanut) is common throughout the South, but its synonym, *pinda* or *pindar*, is less popular; *cooter* is known to the whites in most of the Southern states. All of these words are in use in the Gullah area today. In addition there are several which are practically confined to this area although occasionally found elsewhere in the lower South. *Buckra* is used in the low country, but the works of Gonzales and others have increased its literary diffusion of late. *Ki* as an exclamation is heard among the Negroes in most parts of the Gullah area. *Oona*[122] (*thou* or *you*) thought to be African, is common in the Gullah region.[123]

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[122] Sometimes *yunnah*, *hunnah*, *wunnah*.

[123] Possible sources exist in several West African languages. In the Kuka or Yaw language, *thou* is *yini*. In the Sonray *thou* is *yungar*. See Benton, *Notes on Some Languages of the Western Sudan*, p. 122. *Thou* is *yi*, *ye*, *yu*, *we*, *wo*, *wu*, etc., in several languages of Guinea and the Sudan. In Koi and in Gbaragba the second person plural is *wun*, in Kparabon it is *wuna*, in Bo it is *wu*, in Troughon it is *wono*. See Meillet and Cohen, *Les Langues du Monde*, section on "Langues de Soudan et de la Guinée." In Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, a vocabulary of Sowheli (or Swahili), the language of Zanzibar, is printed.

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192 *Malafee* (whiskey) is used by a few people on St. Helena Island. As shown above, it is not of African origin, but may be of African provenience. In the Georgetown section *plat-eye* is used to signify a ghost or spook. Its etymology is uncertain, and it may be an instance of an Africanism surviving in a restricted area. It is not known on St. Helena Island; in fact it seems to be limited to a section around Georgetown.[124] *Yam* or *nyam* (to eat) is common in the Gullah. It is thought by some to be of African origin. It has been suggested that it comes from the noun *yam* (potato),[125] but this etymology is hardly satisfactory. James Platt, an English writer, derived it from the Fulah (or Ful) *nyami*, to eat.[126] It is interesting to note here that *yam*, meaning to eat heartily, has long been used in England. It is found in several English dialect glossaries,[127] as well as among the obsolete words in several unabridged English dictionaries, and nothing is said of its African origin. In the form *yam*, or *yum-yum*,[128] it is not at all rare among American white people today. Whether *yam*, or *nyam*, was passed from the Eng-

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Oona means *you have*; *koona* means *are you?* or *have not you?* It is doubtful however, if many of our slaves came from the Zanzibar section. It is strange, I think, that no one has claimed that *me*, as used by the Negroes for the nominative of the first person singular, is of African descent. As a matter of fact, *me*, *mi*, etc., are much more common in the nominative of the first person singular in West African languages than are *oona*, *yunnah*, etc., in the second person. See *Les Langues du Monde*, various lists of pronouns in African languages.

[124] Since this was written, *plat-eye* has made its appearance in Roark Bradford's *This Side of Jordan*, a novel of Negro life on the lower Mississippi.

[125] Williams, *De Ole Plantation*, p. vi.

[126] "The Negro Element in English," *Athenaeum*, Sept. 1, 1900, p. 283.

[127] For example, in Grose, *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, London, 3rd ed., 1796, also in the *E. D. D.* (under *yam*, *nyam*, *nyum*, *nyum-nyum*).

[128] In the Gullah, it is sometimes *nyam-nyam* for emphasis. Did the Negro get this usage from English, or did we get ours from him? In this connection, there is a group of tribes in Central Africa noted for their cannibalism, known as the Niam-Niam.

lish to the Negro or from the Negro to the English is not 192
known at present, but there is evidence that its ultimate derivation will prove to be African.[129]

These words include all which are used throughout or in large sections of the Gullah area which have been shown to be of African derivation. The word *Gullah* itself might be added. In the Savannah section the word *Geechy* is similarly used to designate the Negroes of that region, and it seems likely that it came from the name of a river near Savannah, the Ogeechee.[130] Negroes in the vicinity of this river were called 'Geechy River Negroes, which was finally shortened to Geechy.[131]

It is probable that in this country the white man has 174
been the medium of conservation and diffusion of these 192
African words more than the Negro has. Some of the words were adopted by planters in the West Indies and were brought to South Carolina by those who migrated

[129] Smith states that Professor W. A. Craigie derives it "from African *nyam*—to eat: *n'yam*—food." This is not specific enough. I have examined vocabularies of about thirty West African languages, and only one has any word for eat which resembles *nyam*, viz., the Somray, *yauum*.

[130] Pronounced *Ogeechy*. Of Indian origin.

[131] Professor Smith lists *geechy* as *African*, but he refers to a different usage, namely, as an adjective in the sense of "goosey." I have never encountered *geechy* used in this sense. Smith lists several other words as possibly African (*Gullah*, pp. 32-3). These are *cymbi, bakalingo, swanga, guffer, geechy, penepne, da, da-da, du-du,* and Stepney. I have seen no specific African derivations for any of these. None of these is used on St. Helena, as far as our research staff can ascertain, except *swanga*, meaning swaggering, boastful, etc. I think this is too close to our *swank, swankum, swagger,* etc., to need any other explanation. Words like *think* and *thank* are often pronounced in Gullah with more of a *g* sound than a *k* sound. This tendency would change the English dialectic *swanky* to *swangy* or *swanga.* Swanky has the same meaning as Gullah *swanga*, namely "swaggering" (adj.) and "a strapping fellow" (noun). See Wright, *Provincial Dictionary,* also *English Dialect Dictionary* . *Da* and *da-da* are possibly dialect pronunciations of *there, that there.* Smith's list was compiled from various sources, and it was not always possible for him to get definite information as to meanings, pronunciations, etc.

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from the West Indies. The variety of African language groups and the conditions of slavery were such that it was difficult for any particular African word to survive over a large area through its use by slaves alone. But here and there planters would observe certain native words used by a few individuals to designate well known objects like terrapins, peanuts, etc., and they would take up these words in their conversations with slaves. Then, finding that other planters had encountered similar words, they began to use the best known ones in everyday speech and in writing, thus giving them a sound basis for survival. Then, too, there is the probability that a few African words were introduced directly into English by white sailors and traders who had picked them up in the various slave stations on the African Coast.

Naturally enough, in Englishing certain African words, the Southern white man has added an *r* to the spellings so that it will be seen and not heard. He writes *cooter, goober, pindar,* but as a rule he pronounces them as the Negroes do, their African originals being *kudu, gingooba,* and *mpinda.*

THE PERSISTENCE OF GULLAH

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Smith has attributed some of the characteristics and the persistence of Gullah to the native quality of the "Gullah tribesmen." He thinks that "their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia Coast."[132]

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[132] *Gullah,* p. 8.

Williams relates the following incident as an illustra- 19
tion of the unusual persistence of Gullah: "More, per- 177
haps, than a hundred years ago certain Negroes were car- 178
ried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District, as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of Negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the Negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."[133]

It is not at all necessary to predicate an ethnic basis for the survival of the low-country Negro speech. Does not the low-country white speech show the same persistence? And when a Charlestonian or Edistonian moves to the up-country, does it not take several generations to obliterate the low-country characteristics of the speech of his family? The instance cited by Williams merely illustrates the fact that speech patterns are like other human culture patterns. Even in a strange environment they tend to persist indefinitely unless the surrounding group uses pressure to alter them or the immigrant group considers it positively advantageous to substitute the new patterns for their old ones. The persistence of Gullah is merely the persistence of a set of speech patterns in a more or less isolated cultural area.

Most of the younger generation of sea-island Negroes [872]
have been to school for periods ranging from a few days

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[133] *De Ole Plantation*, Preface, p. v.

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19 to seven or eight years. Is this process not rapidly de-
177 Gullahizing the Negro dialect? Probably not. It de-
178 pends a great deal upon the teacher, his own speech, his
872 training, and the possibility of giving the pupils an ade-
quate exposure to standard English. Visiting the humble
schools of the various islands, one is struck with several
[875] facts. The teacher is nearly always a native, which is as it
should be. He, or she, more often the latter on St. Hel-
ena, has little training beyond the school in which he
teaches, he receives a mere pittance for his work and must
do other things to support himself, and as a rule he teaches
about seven grades in a one-room building.

I have heard pupils recite in most of the schools on St. Helena Island. Most of them spell like this: *h-e-a-r-t, haat; m-a-n, mahn; t-h-a-t, dat; w-i-n-e, vine; v-i-n-e, wine; o-i-l, ile;* and the teacher soon despairs of trying to change their habits to any noticeable degree. I once listened to a sixteen year old boy trying to read correctly the simple sentence, "I will give them to the men." With the possible errors *vill, gib, dem, de, mans, mens,* there was not much chance of his ever reading every word correctly. His teacher had him repeat it again and again, but as fast as she made him say one word properly he would go wrong on another one. Finally, after some fifteen trials, she gave up and let him read on in his own fashion. With only a few minutes each day devoted to reading, and with many teachers teaching in the vernacular, there is little chance that the schools will make any serious inroads in the dialect in the present generation. Fifty years, perhaps even a hundred years, from now, the English of the sea-island Negroes will still be looked upon as something unusual.

II

FOLK SONGS OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

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The first collection of Negro folk songs ever published came largely from St. Helena Island.[1] The cultural and geographical isolation of the island, with its high proportion of Negro population, makes it a fruitful field for the study of certain scientific questions concerning Negro songs. Unfortunately, however, the field was neglected until 1925, when N. G. J. Ballanta, an African Negro, published his *Saint Helena Island Spirituals.*

The songs known as spirituals are easily the favorites of the islanders. They are sung on more occasions and by a larger proportion of the people than any other type of song. For this and other reasons, the present discussion will be devoted largely to the spirituals, and especially to certain scientific problems relating to their origin.

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FOLK SONG PROCESSES AND TRAITS ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

Secular Songs

Secular songs are conspicuous for their scarcity on St. Helena Island. Something must be allowed, of course, for the difficulty involved in collecting seculars in a conservative community like St. Helena, but even then this kind of song is relatively rare. A few obsolete minstrel and vaudeville songs, a few insignificant songs brought in by World War soldiers, some phonograph songs of recent importation, and a dozen or more children's game songs of English descent are the only secular songs ordinarily

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[1] Allen, *Slave Songs of the U. S.*, 1867. Of the 136 songs in this book, 55 were from St. Helena.

533 sung on the island. The possession of banjos, guitars, and the like is not quite proper, so these aids to song are not frequently heard. Occasionally a quartet of young men will get together for an evening of "close harmony," while parties, ice cream suppers, picnics and other frolics afford opportunities for singing secular songs.

Religious Songs

Three kinds of religious songs are sung: (1) the old standard church hymns, (2) new choir songs, and (3) spirituals. The hymns are known by most of the old people, who sing them in the same way their masters used to sing them. The leader announces, "number ninety-two, long meter," and reads out a line or two; the congregation sings this in double slow tempo, the leader reads again, and so on through stanza after stanza of Watts or Wesley. To one who is not accustomed to it, this manner of singing is little short of painful. In the old days the Negroes necessarily sang thus, but they retain the pattern now even when most of them know the hymns by heart and could sing them through in regular tempo if they wanted to. Each syllable, each tone, is prolonged to the breaking point, and when four or five words in succession fall on the same pitch, the effect is maddening to the uninitiated. Whereas it would take the ordinary church singer about fifteen seconds to sing the lines,

> Jesus, lover of my soul
> Let me to thy bosom fly,

it takes these people forty or more. As a rule, the hymns are sung in unison, although an occasional bit of bass, tenor, or alto is attempted. Whatever else may be said of

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the hymns, they certainly are not sung with anything like the physical and spiritual satisfaction which accompanies the singing of the old spirituals.

Every church has its choir and choir leader, and some of the churches have a gallery in the rear where the choir sits. Song books of the modern type are purchased for the choir, and new songs are practised patiently in order that they may be introduced in church.[2] The congregation listens with pride, forbearing to join in unless something very familiar is sung. These songs differ from the old hymns in that they are sung through, without lining, in ordinary tempo and with fair harmonizations, but they, too, fall far short of the spirituals in beauty of execution and in unity of emotional expression. [214]

It is the spiritual that really gives the Negroes a chance to express themselves in song. Everyone on the island knows the spirituals and loves them. Church services and praise meetings may often open with hymns, but they end with spirituals. In Penn School chapel exercises they are always sung, and they are the favorites in all the other schools on the island. Scarcely a meeting of a club or a society opens without the singing of a spiritual. Standing in the darkness near a small praise house, hearing the mellow voices of the little group within, abandoned for the moment to a spiritual, one realizes anew that this kind of song has an all-important function in Negro life.

St. Helena, being in an isolated culture area, is an excellent laboratory for the study of the spirituals. Here is found little of that racial inferiority complex which for

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[2] I observed that several of the choir songs recently introduced on St. Helena are songs which were common in the small white churches fifteen years ago. This is an interesting fact which bears upon the questions to be discussed later. (177)

533 try, and here there is felt comparatively little back-wash a time threatened to destroy the spirituals in the up-coun- from the recent exploitation of Negro songs. In such an area certain folk-song traits and processes may be observed more clearly than elsewhere. Some of these may be indicated in the following observations on the St. Helena spirituals.

[184] 1. The spirituals of St. Helena are not markedly different from the Negro spirituals as a whole. They are sung in the characteristic sea-island dialect, of course, and minor variations occur, but fundamentally they are one with Negro spirituals in other parts of the country.

2. The spirituals are sung in unison for the most part. There is very little singing in parts except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other quartets or groups which have practised their songs. Heard from a distance, the singing in praise house or church often gives the impression of multiple part singing, but this effect is more or less of an illusion caused by some of the singers varying the pitch of a given tone or attempting a bit of tenor or alto here, a bit of bass there. Those who look for some weird or new harmonic element contributed to American music by the Negroes of the Sea Islands will be disappointed, for such harmonies as they do use are in no wise different from conventional white harmonies.

533 171 3. There is apparently very little invention or improvisation going on among the island singers. Practically all of the spirituals sung on the island appear to have originated elsewhere and to have migrated to the sea-island region. Because of the continued survival there of many songs rarely heard outside the Sea Islands, it is easy

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to assume that the songs are indigenous. But recent investigation has shown that these island songs are found among Negroes west of the Appalachians and in an obsolescent state among individuals in the piedmont of Virginia and the Carolinas, which tends to show that the songs originated in the upper South, travelled southward and westward, and are now sung only in a few marginal places.

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Perhaps this explains why there is so little mention of local names or incidents in the island spirituals. The St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* tells of "Brother Fuller settin' on de tree of life," referring to the Rev. Richard Fuller, a white Baptist minister who was much esteemed by the slaves. But the tune and stanza pattern of this song probably originated farther north, and the island Negroes merely inserted local names when they learned it. *Don' Let de Win' Blow Heah No Mo'* grew out of the severe storm of 1893, but it appears to have been composed by some individual in Savannah or Charleston.

Although songs were often attributed to local people, only one instance came to the writer's attention in which a person actually claimed authorship. This man frankly said, upon being questioned, that songs known as *his* songs were not his own compositions. He said that they were merely songs which he had "caught" from someone in Savannah or from little "ballets" which he had purchased at some church convention or celebration on the mainland, and had introduced to his church.

4. The secular tendency has not been weeded out of the island spirituals to the same extent that it has among more sophisticated groups. Often when spirituals were being recorded in the outlying schools, stanzas like the fol-

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533 lowing were sung in a perfectly matter-of-fact way:

[539)

See dat man gwine 'cross de fiel'
Kickin' up dus' like a automobile.

Oh, if I die in Tennessee,
Don' wan' my friends to grieve attah me.

That the line between religious and secular songs is not always clear was evidenced by the fact that a call for spirituals in the little island schools often brought forth such responses as *The Green Grass Grew All Around* and *Johnny's So Long at the Fair*. This sort of thing is, of course, not peculiar to St. Helena, but it is more apparent on the Sea Islands than elsewhere because of the relatively retarded cultural status there.

5. Several variations of the same song occur side by side. For example, *Mary Had a Baby* is sung in three ways, *You Better Run* in three ways, *Wrastlin' Jacob* in two, *Jacob's Ladder* in two, and so on. Of course, this trait is not peculiar to the Sea Islands. In fact the variants of this sort probably originated elsewhere, but they are more apparent on St. Helena because of their convergence and survival there. One rare instance of the origin of a local variant was observed on St. Helena during the past year. In one of the churches a spiritual entitled *You Better Live So Jesus Can Use You* was among the favorites. It was sung rather fast, with pronounced swing and syncopation, the tune being as follows:

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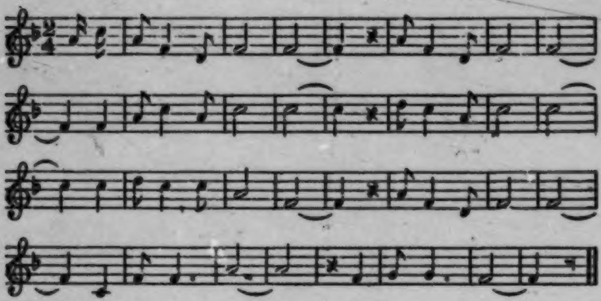
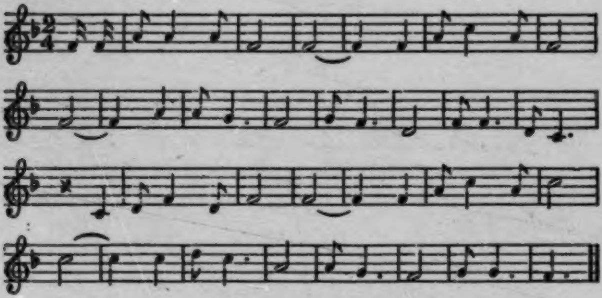
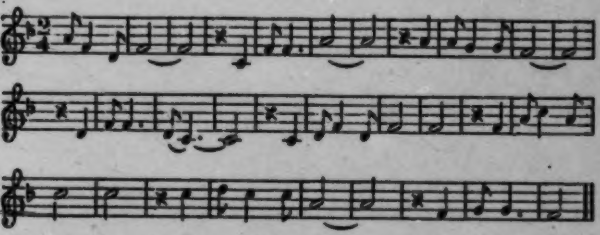


The pastor of another church liked the song, but considered it slightly undignified, so he set to work and revised it to suit his own church. He taught his people to sing it as follows:

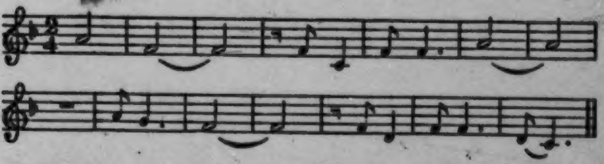


6. The same *motif* is found in different tunes, regardless of words, to an unusual extent. This tendency is found in all music, whether it is folk music or art music, but it seems to be especially strong in the spirituals. The writer is convinced that a careful analysis of Negro spirituals will show that less than a hundred separate *motifs* have given rise to over five hundred tunes. The tendency

is especially observable on St. Helena because of the convergence and survival of so many types there. A thorough demonstration of this trait of the spirituals would require much space, but a few examples will show what is meant. Take, for example, the instance just cited, where a man consciously varied a tune. He probably realized that the derived tune was very much like the pattern, but it is doubtful if he saw that his revision is as much like the following tune, *Who's Gwine-a Lay Dis Body Down*, as it is the pattern:



And, to show how complicated this sort of thing may become, the same *motif* crops out again in a spiritual, *Cry Holy Unto de Lawd*, recently introduced from the up-country. Its opening measures are as follows:



To cite one more instance, there is a similarity of *motif* in *Eagle's Wings* and in *My Mother Is Gone an' Lef' Me Behin'*, the opening strains of which are, in the order named:

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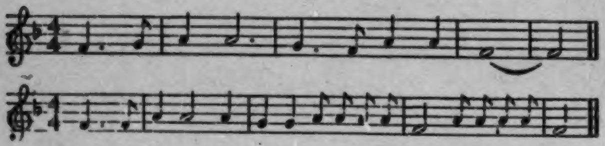

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The relationship does not end here, for many readers will at once see the same *motif* in an old white mountain song, *Careless Love,* and some may be able to trace it in still other songs. Anyone familiar with spiritual tunes can trace another striking sameness of *motif* in the choruses of the following spirituals: *Roll, Jordan, Roll; Ride on, Jesus; Lord, Remember Me;* and *I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray.*

A certain St. Helena song leader, at the writer's request, sang a spiritual which the leader had composed. The tune was identical with another St. Helena tune, yet the composer was unaware of the similarity until it had been pointed out to him. Thus musical imagination works and thus new songs arise in old clothes.

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7. There is a constant process of change going on among the spirituals. No song has a permanent lease on life, even in isolation. It may be passed on as a "new" song elsewhere, but in its old home it is an "old" song and must compete with newcomers. The collection made by Allen and others and published as *Slave Songs* just after the Civil War contained fifty-five songs from St. Helena. Of these, less than a dozen are commonly heard on the island today. The present writer returned to St. Helena a year after making his first collection of spirituals there and found several songs in vogue which he never heard once during his first visit. One of these was an old song

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533 (178) revived, but the others had come in from "foreign" parts. Migrants and visitors coming back from Charleston or Savannah or "up North" occasionally introduce new songs.

SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL IN GENERAL

The Problem Stated

121 533 The spirituals are too well known to Americans to need any further words of praise or appreciation. They stand on their own merits, and nothing that might be said here could add to the esteem in which they are generally held. Rather it is the purpose of the present essay to attack certain scientific questions, long neglected, centering around the relationship of Negro music to white music.

There are several points of view from which the spirituals can be studied. First, there is the point of view of appreciation. The majority of the work done on these songs has been devoted to preserving them and pointing out their poetic and musical beauties and their place in Negro life. Then there is the point of view of the artist or musician, whose motive is to develop the music of the spirituals by improved harmonic arrangements or by using that music as the basis for artistic compositions. Finally there is the scientific approach wherein the spirituals are treated as data apart from all considerations of art and appreciation. The existence of a large body of appreciative and even sentimental literature on the spirituals is something of a hindrance to those who would treat them dispassionately, for anyone who voices an opinion contrary to that which has been generally accepted is likely to be suspected of some ulterior design by certain well-meaning but hyper-sensitive folk. It should be emphasized here

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that the outcome of any scientific inquiry into the roots of American Negro music has nothing to do with the beauty of that music or with the respect which one has for it. No sensible person would quit drinking water because it was found to be composed of A-B-C-X instead of A-B-C-D.

In his *Primitive Music,*[3] Wallaschek, a German writer, expressed the opinion that the Negro spirituals were much overrated. "They are unmistakably 'arranged'—not to say ignorantly borrowed—from the national songs of all nations, from military signals, well-known marches, German student-songs, etc." This started a heated discussion, with the majority of American opinion favoring the opposite theory, namely, that the spirituals are original creations of the Negro. It became fashionable to speak of the spirituals as "America's only indigenous folk song," of the "miracle of their creation," etc.

The publication of Ballanta's *Saint Helena Island Spirituals* has increased the need for research into the origins of American Negro music. In the foreword to his book, Ballanta has discussed at some length the characteristics of African and American Negro music, his opinion being that "no one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem." Since the publication of his book, Mr. Ballanta has pursued his researches in Africa with a view to showing further the African parentage of American Negro music, but the results of this work have not been published to date.

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[3] P. 61. *Cf.* Von Hornbostel's opinion that the spirituals are "songs made by the Negro in European style," in *International Review of Missions*, Oct., 1926.

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The problem may be stated as a problem in cultural anthropology: What happened when the Negro slave, possessing a system of music admittedly different from European or Western music, came into contact with the American white man's music? Did he retain the music of Africa? Did he adopt the white man's music? Did he invest a borrowed music with African characteristics? Did he build a distinctive music, a sort of synthesis, partaking of both Africa and America but unlike either? As was shown in the section on dialect, the low-country Negro dialect reflects the substitution of an English dialect heritage for African language traits. Does the same process hold good for music? St. Helena Island, representing a culture area where logically the African system of music should survive better than elsewhere in America, may throw some light on these questions.

The Comparison of Musics[4]

The logical procedure necessary for studying these questions involves (1) an analysis of the music of the American Negro as represented in the spirituals, (2) an analysis of the white music with which the slave came in contact, and (3) an analysis of African music in those parts of Africa from which our slaves were recruited. The comparisons may be quantitative or qualitative. A given trait may occur in all three musics, but, if it occurred in one very rarely and in the other two very frequently, it might indicate a relationship between the two latter. Likewise a certain trait which exists in two but is absent in the third may indicate a relationship. Because of the lack of

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[4] Some of the points presented here are discussed by Metfessel in *Phonophotography in Folk Music.*

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large collections of authentic native songs from West and Central Africa, the third analysis noted above cannot be carried out at present. Reference will be made, however, to the characteristics which various authorities have assigned to African music. The labors of Mr. Ballanta will, it is hoped, supply this need in the near future. The deficiency as far as the present study is concerned, is not as great as it might seem, for the first step in any event should be the comparison of American Negro music with American white music in order to determine whether the former is distinctive enough to warrant the search for its African origin. 121 533

The following specific points of comparison are suggested:

- I. Words of Songs
  - A. General subject matter
  - B. Specific lines
  - C. Forms or patterns
- II. Tunes
  - A. Modes and scales
  - B. Modulations
  - C. Intervals
  - D. Endings on other than keynote
  - E. Melodic patterns
- III. Rhythm
  - A. Metre
  - B. Syncopation

When the substitution of the dominant culture for the slave culture has proceeded to the extent that it has in the case of the American Negro, logic favors first the premise that the root of any particular culture trait of the American Negro is apt to be found in the white culture of the 121 177 533

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slavery period. To say the least, anyone who is studying the relation of African music to American Negro music would be omitting the first step of the ladder if he failed to acquaint himself with the song environment of the Negro in slavery. As good a musician and scholar as Krehbiel analysed over 500 Negro songs, mostly spirituals, and pointed out certain things as characteristic of Negro songs without even suggesting that these characteristics ought to be checked up similarly in the white religious songs of a hundred years ago.

The American Cultural Background of the Negro Spiritual

121 White, in his *American Negro Folk-Songs*, has covered the American historical background of Negro religious song so well that it would be superfluous to do more than give a brief sketch here. Certain points, however, need to be emphasized.

000 American white hymnology has at least two distinct heritages. One is represented by the dignified, formal, poetic hymns of Watts, Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and others. The other is the heritage of the great revival and camp-meeting movement which reached its height in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of this movement and especially of the type of religious song which it ushered in, little is known.

First a word as to the general conduct of the people during revivals. From Jonathan Edwards, one of the earliest writers to describe the movement, the following quotations are taken:

> . . . I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held

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forth to them that are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a show of affection by weeping; and that because when there have been those outcries, I have found from time to time a much greater and more excellent effect.[5]

Another thing that gives great disgust to many, is the disposition that persons show, under great affections, to speak so much, and with such earnestness and vehemence, to be setting forth the greatness, and wonderfulness, and importance of divine and eternal things, and to be so passionately warning, inviting, and entreating others.[6]

Another thing that some have found fault with, is abounding so much in singing in religious meetings. . . .[7]

. . . all that is pleasant and glorious, and all that is terrible in this world, seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing, and nothing to be left but God, in whom the soul was perfectly swallowed up, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness: since which time there have often been great agitation of body, and an unavoidable leaping for joy; and the soul as it were dwelling almost without interruption, in a kind of paradise; and very often, in high transports, disposed to speak of those great and glorious things of God and Christ, and the eternal world, that are in view, to others that are present, in a most earnest manner, and with a loud voice, so that it is next to impossible to avoid it: these effects on the body not arising from any bodily distemper or weakness, because the greatest of all have been in a good state of health.[8]

The following extracts from letters written to Edwards in 1741 are significant:[9]

. . . God has spoken to us in a more soft and calm Wind; and we have neither had those Outcries and Faintings in our Assem-

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[5] Jonathan Edwards, *On Revivals, Containing a Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God . . . in Northampton, Massachusetts, A.D. 1735*, p. 249.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 252. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 257. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[9] Jonathan Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, pp. 77, 78.

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> blies which have disturbed the Worship in many Places; nor yet those Manifestations of Joy inexpressible, which now fill some of our Eastern Parts.
>
> On the memorable Fourteenth Day of May *last*, there was a Sermon preached to a considerable Auditory in our Meetinghouse, when the Preacher was much carried out in Desire, Zeal and Expectation. . . . The heart of almost every Sinner was pricked, and the Children of God greatly affected with Compassion towards them. The Arrows of Conviction were so sharp, and stuck so fast in the Hearts of many, that they were forced to cry out aloud with the Anguish in their Souls. About Fifty or Sixty Persons, chiefly grown to the Age of Men and Women, were crying out, and praying with loud Voices under a Sense of their Sins, and the Wrath of God under which they felt themselves bound down.

On and on through the efforts of Wesley, Whitefield, Tennent, Asbury, Dow, and scores of lesser lights, the movement swept until it covered practically every part of the nation. In the early nineteenth century it appeared in the South with great vigor. Extreme manifestations such as the jerks, barking, incessant shouting, fainting, etc., became common.

Now, can anyone conceive of the worshippers singing only the stately and solemn tunes of the church in meetings of this kind? No, they sang songs more adapted to the common people and to the emotional turmoil of the meetings. Between 1800 and the Civil War, there were more than fifty revival songsters published, each one going through from one to twenty-five editions. These books are now difficult to obtain, but in various libraries and individual collections there are enough of them preserved to give a picture of the religious songs of the common white people in their revivals, prayer meetings, and other gatherings. The editors of some of these books made significant statements in their prefaces. The editor of *The Christian Lyre,* a book which was copyrighted in 1830 and had gone through eighteen editions by 1838, stated:[10]

> Every person conversant with revivals must have observed that whenever meetings for prayer and conference assume a special interest, there is a desire to use hymns and music of a different character from those ordinarily heard in church. . . . As the work is not designed to please scientific musicians, so much as to profit plain christians, reference will be had, chiefly, to the known popularity and good influence of what is selected. And it is intended to embrace the music that is most current among different denominations of Christians.

The editor of the *Millennial Harp* wrote:[11]

> We are aware of the difficulty of suiting the taste of all classes in musical and devotional compositions. . . . Some of our hymns, which might be objected to by the more grave and intellectual, and to which we ourselves, have never felt any great partiality, have been the means of reaching, for good, the hearts of those who, probably, would not otherwise have been affected.

The editor of *Village Hymns,* a book which was only a little less dignified than the hymns of Watts, to which, indeed, it was intended to be a sort of supplement, defended himself for omitting the revival hymns then in vogue:[12]

> There is a numerous class of hymns which have been sung with much pleasure and profit in seasons of revival, and yet are entirely destitute of poetic merit. Some of my brethren, acquainted with this fact, will probably be disappointed when they find, that so many have been omitted. Others, unacquainted with

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[10] *Christian Lyre,* p. 3.

[11] *Millennial Harp, Designed for Meetings on the Second Coming of Christ,* p. 2.

[12] Asahel Nettleton, *Village Hymns,* p. vi. The preface is dated 1825.

> 000 their beneficial effects at such seasons, would exclude the whole of this class. I am satisfied from observation, as well as from the nature itself of such hymns, that they must be ephemeral. They should be confined to seasons of revival: and even here, they ought to be introduced with discretion; for on this, their principal utility must depend. A book, consisting chiefly of hymns for revivals, however important in its place, would be utterly unfit for the ordinary purposes of devotion—as prescriptions, salutary in sickness, are laid aside on the restoration of health.

From such remarks one gathers that the editors of revival hymn books were selective, that there were songs which were so undignified as to make them afraid to include them. As White says, "The most folksy of all the religious folk-songs of white people in the early nineteenth century were seldom written at all. They were . . . perfectly well-known by all true professors; and, besides, why print songs for congregations the majority of whom cannot read?"[18]

It is almost impossible to find any published accounts describing the actual singing of the less sophisticated white people in the South during the camp meetings. The best records I have found are those left by Lucius Bellinger in his autobiographical *Stray Leaves*. Bellinger was accounted an unusually powerful revivalist in his day. He was born in the South Carolina low-country, and conducted revivals in the Carolinas from about 1825 until after the Civil War. He was known locally as "The War Preacher," "The Strange Preacher," etc., and was typical of the vigorous, emotional, self-made revivalist. The following remarks from his writings are pertinent here:

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[18] *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 44.

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. . . Brothers Howell, Eason, Smith, Steadly, Barton, R. Stephens, and Curry were there, singing as the old-time Methodists used to sing. . . .

Some one then, Brother Holman, I think, sung a few lines of a beautiful hymn; and there was then a shout in the camp. . . .

Another beautiful hymn was sung by Brother H., and we had another shout in the camp.

There was another shout and clapping of hands, in which the preachers joined heartily.

He was a man with a sharp, strong, piercing voice. We now have old-time singing—clear, loud, and ringing.

Departed brother, safe home in glory, I often think and speak of you, having a strong desire to see you once more, and hear you preach and sing again,

"Trouble's over, trouble's over;
A few more rounds of circuits here,
Then all our troubles will be over."

And then a crowd of mourners rushed up as if for their lives; and then Brother Postell came down from the pulpit, singing—

"Trouble's over, trouble's over;
A few more rounds of circuits here,
Then all our troubles will be over."

The Holy Spirit came down, and the friends of Jesus sung the sweet songs I loved so much—"There is a happy land, far, far away;" "Our bondage here will end by and bye;" "I would not live alway;" and many others.

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And then the good man clapped his trembling hands together, and passed through the throng, singing, with a voice that trembled too,

"O' brethren, will you meet me, In Canaan's happy land?"

And then Brothers Lawton, Martin, Davis, Solomons, Blunt, Allen, Roberts, and others, all sung together,

"Yes by the grace of God, we'll meet you, In Canaan's happy land."

At the 3 o'clock service, the Strange Preacher occupied the pulpit, and the friends, by his request, were singing a song he loved very much—hundreds were singing—

"I've listed, and I mean to fight
Till the warfare is over."

Then Dr. B. gave Brother McPhail the sign, and the war-worn veteran passed through that crowd, . . . singing at the top of his trembling voice, as he clapped his hands together—

"I feel the work reviving, I feel the work reviving
Reviving in my soul.
O' brethern, will you meet me, In Canaan's happy land?"

And hundreds of happy souls replied—

"By the grace of God, we'll meet you,
In Canaan's happy land."

Whenever I heard Brother F. clapping his hands, and singing, "The warfare is over," or "I want my friends to go with me," or "I will join the army, by and bye;" I knew that all was right, and that the work of the Lord was reviving.

How happy I felt, while listening to these heavenly songs; one of which I remembered having heard once before. The chorus was,

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"We have but one more river to cross,
And then we'll sing Hosannah!"

A good brother told me, that not long before he left us, he was with him at a prayer-meeting—that he was very happy, and left singing that old song—

"Here we go rejoicing home
From the banquet of perfume."

I knew Brother Box Robinson would be there, and would sing his old song, beginning—

"The richest man I ever saw,
Was one that begged the most.
And a-begging I will go."

You must think much of me while there, particularly if you hear one of my favorite hymns sung—

"Where now are the Hebrew children?
Away over in the promised land."

These quotations show the revival song in action among the whites. Note that there were frequently clapping of hands, moving about, and shouting during the singing. It should also be pointed out that some of the song stanzas quoted by Bellinger are not to be found in any of the revival songsters. This is striking evidence that there existed songs which were either too well known or were considered too undignified to be printed in the song books.

In addition to these published and unpublished songs, there must have existed various cheap paper-bound song books, broadsides, "ballets," children's religious songs, special choir and quartet songs, and the like, many

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000 of which disappeared with the decline of the fervor for camp meetings. And to these might be added, since secular tunes have time and again "got religion," the vast body of white everyday social songs, traditional ballads, children's game songs, nursery rhymes, etc.

533 177 Was the Negro in direct contact with the white revival song? The records of evangelists, travelers, and others show that he was often present at the meetings of the whites.[14] Bellinger, describing one of his big meetings, wrote: "The negroes are out in great crowds, and sing with voices that make the woods ring."[15] In 1845 a South Carolinian wrote that there were more Negro Baptists and Methodists than white in the South and that "almost everywhere they have precisely the same opportunities of attending worship that the whites have, and besides, special occasions for themselves exclusively."[16]

There is one more point which is pertinent here: prior to the Civil War nothing had been said about the Negro possessing a distinctive type of religious song. A few travellers had spoken of certain Negro songs as wild, barbaric, fugue-like, etc.,[17] but most of them commented on the Negro's knowledge of white religious songs. Sir Charles Lyell said of some Negro boatmen on the estate of Hamilton Couper, "occasionally they struck up a hymn,

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(113) [14] See for example, the works of Asbury and Dow; also Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*; Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes*; and various local histories of Methodist and Baptist churches.

[15] *Stray Leaves*, p. 17.

(113) [16] *Two Letters on Slavery in the United States*, by J. H. Hammond, Columbia, S. C., 1845, p. 25. Quoted by White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 37.

[17] Hundley, in his *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, thought that the Negroes had certain "wild choruses and lullaloos, which their fathers must have brought with them from Africa," but he described their religious songs as "not so peculiar and striking." P. 348.

taught them by the Methodists, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity."[18] Another English writer wrote:

> Just before bed-time more solemn sounds are heard: the negro is demonstrative in his religion, and loud and musical were heard every evening the hymns. . . . Remarkable for correctness are their songs, and both men's and women's voices mingled in soft though far-sounding harmony. Some old church tunes I recognized.[19]

Another writer stated that

> . . . the loudest and most fervent camp-meeting singers amongst the whites are constrained to surrender to the darkeys in "The Old Ship of Zion" or "I Want to go to Glory."[20]

William Howard Russell mentioned "those wild Baptist chants about the Jordan in which they (the Negroes) delight."[21] One of the most significant statements, however, is found in a little-known sketch by William Cullen Bryant. The poet visited a tobacco factory in Richmond in 1843. In a certain room about eighty Negroes sang as they worked. Among other comments on the singing, he quoted the proprietor of the factory as follows:

> "What is remarkable," he continued, "their tunes are all psalm tunes and the words are from hymn books; their taste is exclusively for sacred music; they will sing nothing else. Almost all these persons are church members; we have not a dozen about the factory who are not so. Most of them are of the Baptist persuasion; a few are Methodists."[22]

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[18] *Second Visit to the United States of North America*, etc., pp. 244-5.

[19] Rev. Wm. Wyndham Malet, *An Errand to the South in the Summer of 1862*, p. 49. In the library of Dr. Yates Snowden, Columbia, S. C.

[20] Hundley, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

[21] *My Diary North and South*, p. 143.

[22] Quoted (probably from New York *Evening Post*) in DeBow's *Review*, n.s., I, 326 (1850).

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To the question with which one musician dismissed the matter of the Negro's white musical heritage—"Where is that wonderful matrix of hymnology out of which has grown these song jewels of Negro spirituals?"[23]—it may now be replied that such a matrix existed, that the Negro was familiar with it, and that it probably left a much deeper imprint upon him than has generally been supposed. The extent to which the Negro spiritual is based upon a white pattern will appear in the more detailed comparisons which follow.

The Spiritual in Relation to White Revival Songs and Other Folk Songs

Words

General Subject Matter. The subjects treated in the spirituals are so much the same as those in the white songs as to need only a passing comment. Heaven, hell, the judgment, appeals to the sinner, Biblical characters, Satan, the jubilee, the gospel trumpet, the gospel ship, the chariot, the river of Jordan, the union band, etc., are the leading subjects in both the Negro and the white songs.

Most of the early collectors of Negro spirituals, being ignorant of their history, read meanings into them which were not there originally. The desire for freedom expressed in many songs might have come to represent physical freedom to the slave in time, but these songs were either white songs which had reference to freedom from sin, or songs written for him by abolitionists.[24] New meanings and a few new stanzas no doubt grew out of the Civil War, but such new stanzas are rare. For example, the

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[23] R. Nathaniel Dett, ed., *Religious Folk Songs of the Negro*, p. xv.

[24] On this point, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 50-51.

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song known as *Who'll Jine Dat Union* on St. Helena Island might with very little imagination be taken as a Negro Civil War song, but it existed, with the possible exception of one stanza, as a white revival song at least twenty years before the Civil War began.

Specific Lines. A list of all of the lines which are either very similar or identical in white and Negro songs would be extensive. The following lines are from a single white song book:[28]

Ride on, Jesus.

O, there will be mourning.

O, Lord, remember me.

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

If you get there before I do,
Look out for me, I'm coming too.

I have some friends before me gone,
And I'm resolved to travel on.

I am bound for the land of Canaan.

We're going to see the bleeding Lamb.

O, could I hear some sinner pray.

Come to Jesus just now.

Jesus, my all to heaven is gone, etc.

I want to wear the crown.

[28] *Millennial Harp.*

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533 King Jesus is my captain.

177 Lay this body down.

We're on our journey home.

There will be a mighty wailing.

O sinner, you will tremble.

Then we'll shout, our sufferings over.

I will be in this band, hallelujah.

As I was walking out one day,
And thinking about this good old way.

O shout on, children, shout you're free,
For Christ has bought your liberty!

You'll hear the trumpet sounding.

You'll hear the thunders roaring.

You'll see the world a burning.

Oh, the Bible is my compass.

Where are now the Hebrew children?

You will see the graves a bursting.

Then the warfare will be ended.

Gabriel's going to blow.

Blow ye the trumpet, blow.

And Sabbaths never end.

A few more days, or months, at most;
My troubles will be o'er.

Arise and shine . . .
The year of jubilee.

Bid rocks and mountains fall on them,
But rocks and mountains fly.

Angels, roll the rock away.

I never shall forget the day
When Jesus washed my sins away.

It's the old ship of Zion, etc.

These are not all the lines that might be cited. In *The Christian Lyre, The Revivalist, Zion Songster, The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion,* and other song books there are many other parallels.[26] In addition to lines which are the same or nearly the same in both white songs and Negro spirituals, there are numerous instances where the wording of a spiritual is apparently merely a simplification of the white phraseology.

There are not very many instances in which a white song was taken over in its entirety by the Negroes.[27] The line, or at most the stanza, seems to be the unit of transfer.

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[26] See, for example, White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 48-9.

[27] More instances exist, however, than have been admitted even by writers like White, and I am convinced that if we had complete records of the white songs which were never published we would find a surprising number of cases where practically an entire song was taken over by Negroes.

533 177 In view of the illiteracy of the slave and the custom of lining out songs among illiterate whites and Negroes, it is natural that the line or the short stanza should have become the unit remembered. Just as the white people took the old church hymns and converted them into something less dignified and less difficult to learn, so did the Negroes. 000 The whites took Watts' hymn, "Jesus My All to Heaven Is Gone," inserted refrain lines and chorus and made a quite different song of it. In the *Millennial Harp* alone there are two versions of this hymn.[28] One has the refrain, "I want to wear the crown," and a chorus consisting mostly of "My heart says praise the Lord"; the other has the refrain, "Jesus says he will be with us to the end," and a simple chorus. 533 177 Illiterate people depend upon memory, and neither whites nor Negroes limited themselves to the traditional hymn stanzas. Any stanza of a hymn or of some other religious song was likely to be taken up and used wherever it would fit. The process was not peculiar to the Negroes. Indeed, they not only derived the pattern from the whites but some of their songs of this type were undoubtedly taken from the whites after the latter had manufactured them.

533 171 *Form or Pattern.* Several writers have suggested that the repetitive refrains and choruses of the spirituals, together with the custom of singing with solo, or leader, and chorus, are distinctive traits of Negro songs.[29] Take *Swing Low*, for example. Every line is followed by the

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[28] See I, 66; II, 36. In this connection, see an item in the New York *Times*, April 11, 1865, from Richmond in which the correspondent related that the Negroes held a "Jubilee Meeting" during which they sang this same song, with the refrain, "I'm going to join in this army."

[29] See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*; J. W. Work, *Folk Songs of the American Negro*; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of Negro Spirituals*.

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refrain, "Comin' for to carry me home," while each stanza of four lines is followed by the chorus,

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.

The same type exists among the old white songs, of which *Canaan* is an example:[30]

STANZA: Together let us sweetly live,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
Together let us sweetly die,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

CHORUS: O Canaan, bright Canaan,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
O Canaan, it is my happy home,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

A slightly different pattern with first, second, and fourth lines the same is found in many Negro songs, typified by the following stanza:

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Parallels also exist in the white songs. For instance:

Oh, Lord, remember me,
Oh, Lord, remember me.
Now in the bowels of thy love,
Oh, Lord, remember me.[31]

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[30] One of the most popular of the revival songs, found in practically every religious songster in the ante-bellum period. See *Millennial Harp*, I, 58. This hymn is attributed to John Moffit, about 1829, according to White.

[31] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42.

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A still different variation of the repetitive pattern is that in which the first three lines of a quatrain are the same, as in

Good news, the chariot's comin',
Good news, the chariot's comin',
Good news, the chariot's comin',
An' I don't want her leave-a me behin'.

Parallel patterns are plentiful in the white songs in such stanzas as these:

I'm on my way to glory, (3 times)
Ye followers of the lamb.[22]

There'll be no more sorrow, (3 times)
When we all shall meet above.[23]

A further feature of the repetitive trait in Negro songs is the way in which numerous stanzas are built up by the simple insertion of such variations as *father*, *mother*, *preacher*, *deacon*, etc. This pattern existed not only in traditional English folk songs, but also in the white revival songs. In *My Brother, I Wish you Well*, a very popular white song, a stanza and chorus of fifty-two words are expanded into a song of eight stanzas totalling 418 words by the introduction of only nine new words, such as *sister*, *mother*, *neighbors*, *pastor*, *poor sinner*, etc.[24]

It can safely be asserted that there is no stanza form or repetitive pattern in the Negro spirituals which is not also found in the white revival songs.

It is customary for a spiritual to be begun with the chorus rather than the first stanza. This custom evidently existed in the white camp meetings, for some of the 533 tunes in the old books are printed with the chorus at the 171 beginning. Certainly the custom is traditional among white revival singers today, as anyone who is familiar with rural white revivals can testify.

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[22] *Ibid.*, II, 11.
[23] *Ibid.*, I, 34.
[24] *Millennial Harp*, I, 46.

As for the custom of singing with a lead or solo part, 533 the other voices joining in on refrain lines, there are several factors to be considered. First, the pattern is not as common in Negro songs as one might suppose. The leader, it is true, often sings the first few words or even the first line unaided. This is merely to indicate which stanza is to be sung next. As soon as the others catch the sign, they join in. This is different from the true solo-chorus pattern, which is found in such stanzas as the following:

Solo: Hypocrite, hypocrite, God despise
All: Bear yo' burden in de heat of de day.
Solo: Tongue so sharp an' he will tell lies,
All: Bear, etc.

Now on St. Helena, where presumably, any African song pattern should have flourished and survived, this true solo-chorus pattern is rather rare, occurring in about 15 per cent of the spirituals sung there; whereas in the up-country spirituals, judging by the Hampton and Fisk collections, this pattern is more common.[85] Finally, there is 533 the point that the leader-chorus pattern also existed to 171 some extent in the white songs.[86] The extent of its use can

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[85] In the latest Hampton edition, practically nine-tenths of the songs are arranged in this way. Much of this is due, I believe, to an effort to arrange the songs so as to be especially suitable for quartet singing. In ordinary singing, some of the "solo" sections are really sung *in unison*, which is a different matter.

[86] The arrangement of some of the tunes indicates this. See also some of the statements quoted above from Bellinger's *Stray Leaves*, where it was stated that

533 probably never be determined, for our knowledge of *how*
171 the whites sang their songs is fragmentary.

The most logical way to view the leader-chorus pat-
533 tern in Negro songs is to think of it as, partially at least,
171 a product of the cultural situation during the time the Ne-
177 gro was taking over the white revival songs. The pattern was certainly used by whites, especially when a new song was being taught to people who were nearly all illiterate. The pattern was thus present for the Negro to copy, and, further, the same condition of illiteracy among Negroes necessitated the use of the pattern when new
533 songs were being taught them. There is, of course, the possibility that this style of singing represents a survival
178 of an African custom, as has been claimed by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, James Weldon Johnson, N. G. J. Ballanta, and other writers.

TUNES

533 *Modes*. The distribution of tunes according to the modes in which they are sung is an interesting and significant point of comparison. In his *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, Krehbiel reported the results of an analysis of 527 Negro songs.[57] The general modal distribution of these songs, compared with a similar analysis of 414 white religious songs,[58] is as follows:

	NEGRO SONGS PER CENT	WHITE SONGS PER CENT
Major	83.8	78.9
Minor	11.7	18.6
Mixed or vague	4.4	2.4

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533 171 ne man came down the aisle singing certain words, and hundred of voices replied with certain words.

[57] Includes about 50 secular songs. Most of the songs are from the United States, but a few are from the West Indies. Krehbiel, p. 43. Fisher (*Seventy Negro Spirituals*) made a similar analysis, with about the same results.

[58] From *The Christian Lyre* and *Millennial Harp*.

533 There is quite evidently no significant point of difference here. In fact, the only significant thing here is the remarkable agreement between the modal distributions of the white and the Negro songs. Krehbiel's figures showing that about one-tenth of Negro songs are minor were published years ago, yet the assertion that Negro music is predominantly minor is still heard.[20] Not only is Negro music predominantly major, but it is less in the minor mode than were the white revival songs of a century ago. Minors are practically extinct in ordinary white church music today, but many weird tunes in that mode are to be found in the old revival songsters.

533 171 *Deviations from the Conventional Scale.* Of more importance, however, is a comparison of the details of the distributions within the major and minor modes. While Western music in general is based on what is called the diatonic scale of seven tones, all tunes do not necessarily make use of all the possible tones in the scale. In a given tune, one or more tones may be missing or sharped or flatted. The presence or absence of such variations from the conventional scale is a significant point in the comparison of two musics. The following list comprises

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[20] Persons untrained in music tend to identify any plaintive or weird tune as minor, ignorant of the fact that this term designates a specific musical trait which is determined by the tonal relations and which may or may not give an impression of sadness. It is possible to arrange major and minor chords or melodies so that even a musical person will confuse them. An interesting incident recently appeared in Reed Smith's *South Carolina Ballads*, p. 144. As good an observer as Smith described a certain song as "a peculiar minor air," yet the tune is major throughout. The mistake arose, I think, because the fourth and seventh tones are missing. This leads me to the point that the extensive use of the pentatonic scales in Negro songs (i.e. major with the fourth and seventh tones omitted) is responsible for the layman's belief that Negro music tends to be minor. The absence of the fourth and seventh in pentatonic tunes does often produce plaintive effects, and this, together with the customary minor-sad association, is sufficient to explain the error.

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all the variations of the major mode which occurred more than once in the two white song books mentioned above. The deviations are listed in the order of their importance, the most frequent one being at the head of the list. In the parallel column the presence or absence of these same deviations is indicated, the figures denoting the rank of the trait in Negro songs.

Deviations in White Songs	Rank of Same in Negro Songs
1. Absence of seventh tone	2
2. Absence of fourth and seventh	1
3. Absence of fourth	3
4. Absence of sixth	4
5. Flat seventh	5
6. Absence of sixth and seventh	6
7. Flat third	7

Every variation in the white songs is found in the Negro songs, and none is present in the Negro songs which is not also found in the white songs. Furthermore, the only point of difference in the ranks of the traits in the major mode is that the absence of the fourth and seventh tones heads the list for Negro songs and comes second in the white songs.

Krehbiel thought that the tunes in the minor mode show the independence of the spirituals of European influence. He named the following deviations as significant: raised seventh, raised sixth, and absence of sixth.[40] These are exactly the same three most frequent deviations in the white minor tunes which I analyzed.

[40] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 83 et seq. Fisher, using a different grouping, gets the following: minor with flat seventh, 32; with sharp seventh (harmonic), 15; without seventh, 14; with sharp and flat seventh, 7; total, 68. See *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

Taking up now more detailed comparisons between the white songs and the spirituals, we find the following distribution of traits for the songs in the major mode.[41]

	Number		Per Cent	
	White	Negro‡	White	Negro
Pentatonic	23	111	9.6	25.1
No seventh	39	78	16.2	17.6
No fourth	10	45	4.2	10.2
Flat seventh	8	20	3.3	4.5
No sixth	12	*	5.0	*
No sixth and seventh	5	*	2.1	*
Other major	143	188	59.6	42.6
Total	240	442	100.0	100.0

‡ Figures taken from Krehbiel's study of 527 Negro songs. See *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 43.

* Krehbiel did not list these at all. They are found in the spirituals to about the same extent as in white songs. A count of 200 of the same songs that Krehbiel used shows the absence of sixth in 6.3 per cent of the cases, and the absence of sixth and seventh in 2.9 per cent of the cases.

Several things stand forth in this table. First, the flat seventh, so often spoken of as a characteristic of American Negro music, turns out to be relatively rare. It will be discussed presently. Next, the table shows that the absence of the fourth tone and the absence of the seventh tone in the spirituals are actually more significant statistically than the flat seventh. But these are also present in white songs in sufficient proportion to prohibit their being listed as distinctive traits of the spirituals.

The proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is high—25.1 per cent of all the majors as against 9.6 per cent in the white songs. The pentatonic scale, with the

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[41] For Fisher's data on spirituals, which are very similar to Krehbiel's, see his *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

533 171 fourth and seventh tones omitted, is said by Krehbiel, Work, Dett, Ballanta, and others to be the outstanding characteristic of native African music. Here, then, would seem to be positive proof of the influence of African music on the spirituals. However, several points of interest need to be discussed here.

First, the pentatonic scale is not entirely unknown to the white songs, as it is found in nearly 10 per cent of all tunes in the major mode in the two books studied. This scale seems to be a sort of simplified medium of musical expression, for it is the basis of the music of most of the less civilized peoples, and is found in the simpler songs of the English and Americans—the nursery songs, children's game songs, folk ballads, unsophisticated religious songs—to a greater extent than among the art songs.

533 177 Some of the writers on Negro songs have pointed out the similarity of Negro and Scotch music in respect to pentatonic tunes, but they have always vigorously denied any possible Scotch influence on Negro music. In this, they are in error. They contend that there were not enough Scotch in the South in colonial and ante-bellum days to have left any influence on the music of the time. This contention falls down in the face of facts which show that, aside from the great wave of Scotch-Irish migration which came from the North and settled in the Southern piedmont and mountain regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a considerable sprinkling of both Highland and Lowland Scotch in the Southern slave states, entering by way of Charleston, Wilmington, and Norfolk. Estimates for colonial North Carolina,

for example, place the proportion of Scotch at from 11 to 533
40 per cent of the total white population.[42] 177

But, what is of greater significance, the folk-song culture of the English and the English-speaking Scotch is essentially the same.[43] 533 171 177 This is especially true of the Lowland Scotch and the Northern English, and this is the area from which came the majority of people whom we call Scotch-Irish. The use of the "gapped" scale turns out not to be confined to the Scotch, but to be characteristic of folk singing in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[44] At any rate, whether one calls them Scotch, Scotch-Irish, or English, the music which these people brought to this country is in many respects similar to the music of the Negro spirituals. Recent work has shown that the traditional English and Scottish folk music has survived to a surprising extent in this country. What of the presence of the pentatonic mode in this music?

In his *South Carolina Ballads*, Professor Reed Smith 000 published fourteen traditional ballad tunes collected from white people. Four, or 28 per cent, of these are pentatonic. From the Appalachians, where these old songs have survived best, larger collections are available. In the great collection contained in Campbell and Sharp's *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, 324 folk tunes are published. The "gapped" scale is predominant. The pentatonic, with fourth and seventh tones omitted, is the outstanding scale of these songs. The proportions of

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[42] See U. S. Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p. 117. The highest estimate, 40 per cent, is made by Professor R. D. W. Connor of the University of North Carolina. See his *History of North Carolina*.

[43] Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, Introduction, p. xix.

[44] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Songs*; also Campbell and Sharp, Introduction.

000 pentatonic tunes among the three classes of songs in the book are:[45]

Traditional ballads	27 per cent	pentatonic
Nursery songs	47 per cent	"
Other songs	18 per cent	"
All songs together	25 per cent	"

Now, in these mountains, where the English and Scottish folk culture is best preserved in this country and where there are practically no Negroes, there are places where one can hear the old-time spirituals, such as *Old Ship of Zion, Canaan, Safe in the Promised Land,* etc. Some will claim at once that these songs were borrowed from Negroes by the ancestors of the present generation of mountain white people. But, in view of what has already been shown of the history of white revival songs, this claim becomes preposterous. Every one of them can be found in the old white revival songsters, and practically every one of them exists in one or more versions as a Negro spiritual. In a recent book,[46] a section was devoted to these religious songs. Of ten major tunes, three are pentatonic, four have no seventh, and two have no fourth.[47] I submit that here we have a class of songs which were originated by the English- and Scotch-Americans during the great revivals in the early nineteenth century—songs cast in the same gapped scale, especially the pentatonic, which characterizes the traditional folk songs

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[45] I have sampled other similar mountain collections, and find the proportion of pentatonic tunes to run between 20 and 30 per cent. Curiously enough, 25 per cent is the proportion found in Negro spirituals by Krehbiel.

[46] Richardson and Spaeth, *American Mountain Songs.*

[47] Counting all the songs in the book (ballads, love songs, and nonsense songs are the other divisions) the number of major tunes is 45, of which 13, or 29 per cent, are pentatonic.

000 which they brought with them to America and which they have preserved so well in the mountains. The Scotch-Irish and English peasantry, with their love of song and their religious zeal, undoubtedly played a conspicuous part in shaping the folk music of the camp meetings. The revival movement came along on the heels of the great migration from Pennsylvania to the Southern piedmont. In fact, some of the editorial writers of a century ago attributed the successes and the excesses of the revivals to the Scotch-Irish.

533 171 177 The theory that the pentatonic scale in the Negro spirituals is a distinctive trait owing its origin to African music loses some of its force. For it is now just as plausible to say that, since the general tendency has been for the Negro to adopt white culture patterns, and since the proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is the same as in the English and Scottish folk songs, the Negro took over his religious folk songs from the folk productions of the English and Scotch-Irish. At any rate it cannot be logically maintained that a trait which exists in English folk music in America to the same extent as it does in Negro folk music is a *distinctive* trait of Negro music.

000 The absence of the seventh tone in the tunes of the spirituals is statistically next in importance. This, however, is as frequent in the white revival songs as in the spirituals—16.2 per cent in the former and 17.6 per cent in the latter. Analysis of the collections of English ballad music surviving in America shows about the same proportion of no-seventh tunes. Obviously there is nothing distinctively Negro here. The history of the missing seventh in English folk music is similar to that of the pentatonic

000 scale. In fact, the insertion of the seventh may be regarded as a step in the evolution of the full seven-tone scale from the five-tone scale.[48] Exactly the same applies to the missing fourth tone.

This leaves the flat seventh as a possible distinctive trait in the spirituals. But this, too, turns out to be anything but distinctive. First, it is not frequent enough—4.5 per cent—to be significant. Figured on the most favorable basis,[49] it occurs in 8 per cent of the spirituals. Second, it is actually as frequent in the English folk music surviving in America as in the spirituals.[49a] Third, it was a regular tonal element in some of the old modes of the church and has always been a perfectly normal tone in real English folk singing. Conventional music adopted a different major scale, one having a semi-tone between the seventh and eighth tones, and, being trained in that system, the average musician looks upon a flat seventh as an unusual deviation or even an expression of abnormal musical sense. The following remarks from Sharp, England's best folk-song authority, are relevant here.

> Cultivated people, who have been brought up on modern music, will only acquire the art of modal singing with difficulty; and, to many of them, the Gregorian tones, with their flattened sevenths and unexpected intervals, will never sound natural or convincing. . . . The flattened seventh possesses no terrors for the country singer. The leading note [the conventional seventh] is much more likely to cause him difficulty. Who has not heard

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[48] For discussion of this point, see Sharp, *English Folk-Songs*, chs. 5 and 6; also Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs*, etc., Introduction, XV, XVI.

[49] That is [illegible] a total which omits pentatonic and no-seventh tunes, since a flat seventh could not occur in tunes where there is no seventh tone.

[49a] A count of the flat sevenths in Campbell and Sharp's book and a sampling of songs in other books, shows the flat seventh to occur in about 6 per cent of all majors.

> the village organist struggling to force the sharpened seventh, especially of tunes in the minor mode, upon the unwilling ears of a rustic congregation?[80] 000
>
> This use of the flatted seventh, as though it were a leading-note, is often to be found in folk-airs, especially in those of England. The modern musician finds, in this practice, that which is so directly at variance with all that he believes to be natural, that I have known him to question the fact that folk-singers really do sing such phrases. They do, however, and the effect is often very beautiful.[81]

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Ballanta has tried to distinguish between the Negro's flat seventh and the use of that tone in white music.[82] With the Negro, he says, the tone is a regular or normal element in the scale, not necessitating any modulation, while in white music the occurrence of this tone always induces a modulation to the key of the subdominant, as from C-major to F-major, for example. Ballanta is quite right if he is thinking of conventional white music, for training in our present melodic system has made it difficult for musicians to conceive of the use of a flat seventh without modulating to a flatter key. The distinction which he claims for this tone in Negro music, however, is exactly the same thing which characterizes the English folk use of the flat seventh, namely, as a natural tone in the scale inducing no modulation. This use of it occurs in the traditional ballads and other songs surviving in the Appalachians. Since the Negro was in contact with the English folk music culture throughout the period of slavery, it is just as logical to suppose that his use of the flat seventh was borrowed as to believe that he brought it from Africa. (171)

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[80] *English Folk-Song*, pp. 55-6.
[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.
[82] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Foreword, xiv.

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533 171 Perhaps it is no accident that the proportion of flat sevenths is so nearly the same in English-American folk music and the Negro spirituals. At any rate, the flat seventh should not be thought of as a peculiar trait of Negro music.

There is one more point at which the music of the spirituals is said to vary from white music, and that is on the third tone of the scale. Any collector of Negro tunes can vouch for the fact that a singer sometimes sings a third which is neither the regular tone nor its flat. It is as a rule midway between the third and its flat (in C-scale, for example, between E and E flat.) The term "neutral third" has been applied to this tone. It cannot be represented on our conventional staff, hence its frequency has never been actually noted down as has the flat seventh.[33] From experience I should judge it to be of about the same frequency as the flat seventh. In *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel has pictured two or three actual instances of the neutral third. He discusses it as a possible African trait in Negro music, intimating that this is the probable explanation. However, I have heard white folk singers use exactly the same intonation of the third, and it was derived by them not from the Negro but from their English folk music culture. To quote Sharp again:

> It must be understood that the third is not a fixed note in the folk-scale, as it is in both of the modern scales. The English folk-singer varies the intonation of this note very considerably. His major third is never so sharp as the corresponding interval in the tempered scale, to which modern ears are attuned. On the other hand, it is often so flat that it is hardly to be distinguished from the minor third. Frequently, too, it is a "neutral" third,

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[33] Strictly speaking, the flat seventh is not always flat enough to deserve that name, for it is sometimes intoned between the major seventh and minor seventh. It would really be more accurate to call it neutral.

i. e., neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrases in which it occurs.[84] 533 171

To summarize the present section: (1) Certain peculiarities of mode and scale supposed to be characteristic of the Negro spirituals are found in a sample of white revival tunes of a century ago to a sufficient extent to raise a question as to the validity of the claim that they are distinctive traits of the spirituals. (2) A study of English folk music in its native land and as it survives in America reveals that every supposedly distinctive scale trait of the spirituals is found in the English folk music, and that the proportions of each trait are practically the same in both musics.

Suppose for a moment, however, that the scale and modal peculiarities of the spirituals are African survivals. Where would one expect to find these traits preserved best? Naturally in isolated places like the Sea Islands where the Negroes have been off the path of social change and have had relatively little contact with white people, especially since the Civil War. What light do the St. Helena spirituals throw upon this question? 533 178 [177]

The Allen collection (1867) contained 55 spiritual tunes from St. Helena. Of these 80 per cent were major and 14 per cent were minor. These proportions are about the same as in the white hymns of that time. The pentatonic, which should have been very frequent here if it is an African survival, is found in about 13 per cent of the major tunes! The frequency of the pentatonic in the 527 spirituals[55] studied by Krehbiel was 25.1 per cent. Thus the proportion of pentatonics was nearly twice as high in the spirituals from other sections as in those from St. Helena. The recent collection made on St. Helena by Ballanta, however, contains a very high proportion of pentatonic tunes—46 per cent.[56] Furthermore, as was pointed out in a previous connection, practically every song recorded by Allen sixty-two years before had been forgotten or was sung only rarely when Ballanta made his collection. In other words, a new crop of songs had come to the front since the Civil War, and the proportion of pentatonics had increased. Did this new crop originate on St. Helena? It is extremely unlikely that it did. In a collection of spirituals made by Miss Mary A. Grissom in Kentucky, about half of the songs are the same as those now sung on St. Helena.[57] If these originated on St. Helena since the Civil War, how does it happen that they got over to Kentucky without being picked up *en route* by some of the

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[84] *English Folk-Song*, p. 71.

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[55] Including the Allen collection.

(114) [56] *Too high*, as the St. Helena folk would say. I am convinced that, while there has been an increase in the proportion of pentatonics on the island, it is not this great. Ballanta, a native African, must have been so accustomed to a pentatonic scale that he heard some of the spirituals as pentatonic when they were really not. In several instances I found that he had written without fourths and sevenths tunes in which I heard distinctly one of these tones. I have verified this by the phonograph records which I made on the island. In all my analyses I have used a very strict definition of the pentatonic. If either the fourth or the seventh tone occurs, even only once, in any way other than as a very light passing tone, I do not class a tune as pentatonic, but put it under another head, as "no fourth" or "no seventh" or "regular major." Krehbiel used a less strict definition, for I counted the pentatonics in half of the songs which he used and obtained 19.5 per cent where he obtained 25.1 per cent. Thus Krehbiel, if he had analyzed my white revival songsters, would have found a higher proportion of pentatonics than I did.

[57] Grissom, *The Negro Sings a New Heaven*, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

collectors of spirituals? And why are they not common 533
property of the Negroes in the intermediate sections? The
simple explanation, I believe, is this: these songs originated 533
further north than St. Helena, probably in the piedmont 174
of North Carolina and Virginia, during the white
revival period. By the usual process of folk transmission
they spread out gradually from the area of origin, and, by
the time they reached the outlying sections like the Sea
Islands and the trans-Appalachian country, they had disappeared
and had been replaced by other songs in the area
of origin. It would be safe to predict that if collectors
will look into the matter they will find in other communities
on the fringe of the black belt and among individuals
of the older generation in the piedmont a surprising number
of these St. Helena spirituals.[88] Thus the percentage
of pentatonic tunes on St. Helena increased after the infiltration
of songs from the area which had felt strongly
the folk music heritage of the Scotch-Irish. These considerations [114]
are all directly opposed to the theory that the [178]
scale peculiarities of the spirituals survive from African
traits.

Modulations. Change from one key or one mode to 533
another within a tune is practically unknown in the Negro spirituals. Modulations are frequent in conventional church music, but in the plainer music of the white revivals of a hundred years ago as recorded in the songsters, modulations were exceedingly rare. This musical heritage was derived from English folk songs, of which Sharp has said,

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[88] For example, recently a Negro woman from Chapel Hill, N. C., was comparing spirituals with a woman from St. Helena. Upon hearing the St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, she exclaimed, "That's the way my folks used to sing it all the time." In the up-country the other version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* has displaced this one, which is usually considered peculiar to the Sea Islands. [184]

533 "It may be taken, as a general statement, that they never change their key or their mode."[59] Accidental sharps and flats occur occasionally both in the spirituals and in white revival songs, but they are nearly always auxiliary notes which call for no change of key or mode.

Intervals. The pitch distance of each note from the keynote or from a preceding note in a tune affords a basis of comparison of one type of music with another. When the interval is computed as of a certain number of steps below or above the keynote, it is called a keynote interval.[60] When it is computed with reference to the preceding note, it is known as a previous-note interval. A computation of intervals makes possible a statistical or composite view of a large number of tunes.

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171 A computation of keynote intervals in the first forty-five songs in *Millennial Harp* as compared with thirty-five spirituals, taken at random from Allen's *Slave Songs* and the Fisk and Hampton collections, is summarized in the following table.[61]

Keynote Intervals	Frequency of Interval	
	White songs	Negro songs
1. P1 (keynote)	396	413
2. Major 3rd above keynote	388	358
3. Perfect 5th above keynote	346	268
4. Major 2nd above keynote	324	254
5. Perfect 4th above keynote	194	117
6. Perfect 4th below keynote	86	101

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[59] Sharp, *English Folk-Song*, p. 68.

[60] In *C*-scale, for example, *D* is the regular second tone, and is therefore said to be a major second from the keynote; *F* is a *perfect fourth*; *G*, a *perfect fifth*; *B*, a *major seventh*; *B flat*, a *minor seventh*, i.e., a half-step short of a *major seventh*.

[61] Omitting a few rarely used intervals which occurred only three or four times. For a similar analysis of intervals in a score of mixed Negro songs, see Metfessel, *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 142 *et seq.*

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7. Major 6th above keynote	100	98
8. Minor 3rd below keynote	59	63
9. Octave above keynote	79	51
10. Minor 2nd below keynote	52	37
11. Minor 3rd above keynote	39	36
12. Minor 7th above keynote	9	24
13. Major 7th above keynote	31	6
Total number of intervals	2,103	1,826

The intervals are ranked in the order of their importance in the Negro songs. It will be noted that the white ranks correspond very closely with these. The comparison of ranks, taking the order of the intervals in the Negro songs as the basis, is as follows:

Negro: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13
White: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 7 - 6 - 9 - 8 - 10 - 11 - 13 - 12

It will further be noted that the first three intervals listed—incidentally, these form the major triad—occupy half of the entire number of tones in both white and Negro songs. To be exact, 54 per cent of the white song intervals and 57 per cent of the Negro are in the major triad. There is an interesting difference between the distributions of these three leading intervals:

	Percentage Distribution	
	White	Negro
Keynote	19	23
Major 3rd	18	19
Perfect 5th	17	15
	54	57
All others	46	43
	100	100

The spread of these three intervals is rather even over the major triad in the white songs, while the Negro songs make larger use of the keynote and smaller use of the fifth tone. In other words, the Negro songs show a simpler melodic structure in the sense that they cluster more about the keynote than do the white songs. The comparison, however, develops no serious differences between the two types of song.[62]

Endings on other than the keynote. It is the usual thing for a song to end on the tonic or keynote, this being required to give a feeling of completion or satisfaction, but occasional deviations may be found. Of 205 spirituals in the major mode, thirteen end on the fifth tone rather than on the tonic; and, of 325 old white religious songs, six end on the fifth. Thus the trait is found in both types of songs, but is more frequent in the spirituals than in the white songs. The white religious songs, it should be repeated, are only partially representative of the musical environment of the colonial and ante-bellum period. The traditional ballads and other folk songs brought over from England by the white people had a considerably larger proportion of songs ending on the fifth. Several white songs end on the third, but I know of only one spiritual which ends on the third.[63]

Melodic patterns. Tunes can be grouped according to certain figures or patterns which they follow. Consider the opening phrases, for example. The most common

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[62] The comparison of the other kind of interval, the previous-note interval, cannot be included in the present study. Metfessel, p. 142 *et seq.*, has some figures on previous-note intervals, but he analyzed blues and other songs along with spirituals. He found the minor third to be the most frequent previous-note interval.

[63] Allen, *Slave Songs*, No. 88, p. 68.

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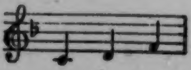
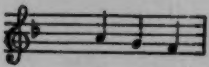
opening pattern in the spirituals, with variations in rhythm, of course, is:[64]

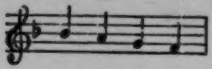


White folk songs and revival songs abound in the same pattern. As Sharp says, this beginning is found in "many folk-tunes, especially those of Celtic nations."[65]

Closing patterns are very diverse, but a sampling of fifty spirituals and fifty white revival songs shows that the leading pattern is composed of the last three, sometimes four, notes of the major scale in descending order. Thus



or



This type of ending occurs in a little over one-third of both white and Negro songs.

A tune, taken as a whole, can usually be divided into phrases which are related in certain ways. Most of the tunes of the spirituals, like the words, fall into four phrases, the patterns of which may be indicated by A - B - A - B, A - B - A - C, A - B - C - D, etc. In the familiar spiritual,

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[64] See, for example, '*Raslin' Jacob*; *Old Ship of Zion*; *He Ain't Comin' Here to Die No Mo'*; *Oh, Freedom*; *I've Got a Mother in de Heaven*; *I'm a-Rolling*; *Old Time Religion*; *I'm Goin' to See My Lovin' Father When I Get Home*; *Go Round*; *Dere is Rest for de Weary Traveler*; *You Can't Find a New Hiding Place*; *I Am Hunting for a City*; *When I Lay My Burden Down*; *O Lord, Have Mercy on Me*; *I'm Going Down to de River Jordan*; *Fix Me, Jesus*; *Angel Rolled de Stone Away*; and others.

[65] *English Folk-Song*, p. 86.

533 171 *I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always*, for example, the pattern is A - B - A - C, that is, the first and third phrases are the same, while the second and fourth are different. This pattern is found in nearly fifty per cent of the spirituals. If the three patterns, A - B - A - C, A - B - A - B, and A - B - C - D, be taken out, only a handful of spirituals remain for other patterns. The same holds true for white revival songs and folk songs, and it cannot be argued that there is any particular melodic pattern which is peculiar to the spirituals.

533 *Harmony.* A thorough consideration of all the questions centering around the harmonies of the spirituals would involve a long technical discussion which would go beyond the limits of this treatise. In brief, it may be pointed out (1) that the testimony of the majority of the early travelers in Africa is to the effect that singing in harmony seems to have been rare or poorly developed in West Africa;[66] (2) that on the Sea Islands, where contact with white music has been limited and where the Negroes should have preserved their African harmonies if they had any, the spirituals are usually sung in unison[67]

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[66] Consult Wallaschek, *Primitive Music.*

[67] [114] The same observation was made by Allen in *Slave Songs* and by Miss Towne in her *Letters and Diary.* In *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, James Weldon Johnson says that Allen probably was mistaken, that the Negroes sang in harmony but that it was bizarre and Allen did not appreciate it. I am convinced that Allen knew what he was talking about, for I can vouch for the fact that during a residence of nearly four months on St. Helena, I never heard a single spiritual sung in full harmony by the ordinary untrained folk in the schools, churches, and praise houses. Sometimes I heard a girl attempting an alto part, but it was always the conventional alto of white songs. It was a revelation to listen to a member of the Penn School Quartet attempt to teach a quartet of boys from an outlying school the simple harmonies for a spiritual which they were going to sing in a quartet contest. To those who like to say, "Get four Negro boys together and you have a quartet," I would say, true of the Negro boys and true of white boys—*provided the boys are familiar with the old reliable harmonies.*

except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other persons who have a rudimentary knowledge of sight singing; and (3) that the harmonies used by Negroes, when they use any, are exceedingly simple and are not different from conventional white harmonies. It is extremely doubtful whether the Negro has contributed anything new in harmony in the spirituals. William Arms Fisher, whose introduction to *Seventy Negro Spirituals* is a valuable essay on Negro music, recognized this when he wrote:[68] 533

> The net result of the work of these two earnest seekers for the true Negro harmony is therefore disappointing to those expecting something unusual, for, as already stated, the harmonization in both cases is altogether conventional.

TEMPO AND RHYTHM

Metre. Williams Arms Fisher has pointed out the preponderance of duple time in Negro songs and the preponderance of triple time in other folk songs:[69] 533 171

> Out of the 405 spirituals included in the three first published collections, only 13 are in triple metre. . . . In contrast to this, 53 of the 100 songs in Bantock's *Folksongs of All Nations* are in triple or compound metre, while an analysis of Florence H. Botsford's *Folksongs of Many Peoples* shows that in two volumes containing 368 songs nearly 44 per cent are in triple metre.

An analysis of 250 white religious songs from *Millennial Harp* and *The Christian Lyre* as compared with 250 Negro spirituals from the Allen, Hampton, and Fisk collections, is as follows:

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[68] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xv. The two persons referred to are Miss Emily Hallowell, who edited *Calhoun Plantation Songs*, and Mrs. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, who edited *Negro Folk-Songs, Hampton Series*.

[69] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xvi.

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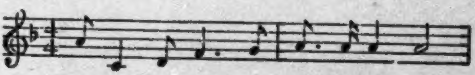
	Per Cent Negro Songs	 White Songs
Duple Time	96	70
Triple Time	4	30

Triple time is almost unknown in the spirituals, but is found in nearly a third of the white songs studied.[70] Two-part time probably predominates among Negro singers because it is so intimately connected with their habit of swaying the body, patting the feet, and clapping the hands while singing. These things fall naturally into two-part time beats, and I have observed over and over that when the untrained Negro attempts to sing without giving himself the benefit of these bodily rhythmic clues, he is a very poor time keeper. This habit may well represent the survival of African tempo patterns.[70a]

533 *Syncopation.* Syncopation is the very soul of the rhythmic patterns of the spirituals. The emphasis is often shifted from the strong to the weak part of a time unit as in the following measures from *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen:*



There were some unusual rhythm patterns in the white revival tunes, however, as the following extracts will show:[71]

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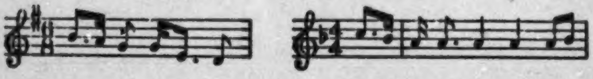
[70] It is interesting to note, however, that, if the most folksy of the published revival songs be taken as a group, only nine or ten per cent use triple time.

[70a] It is not certain, however, that African metre is predominantly duple. Krehbiel and others seem to have assumed this. But note that C. S. Myers in Jekyll's *Jamaican Song and Story,* Appendix A, spoke of the "fondness for triple measure" in a group of African songs which he analyzed.

[71] From *Millennial Harp,* I, 40 and 47, respectively.



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But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns. 171 177 178

Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes 121 533

Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion. 121 177 533

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 177 533

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177 533 white songs from Negro songs.[72] Their knowledge of white religious backgrounds was very limited, and they were strongly influenced by sentimental attitudes in their decisions as to what constituted a real Negro song. Having rejected as "spurious" *Give Me Jesus, Climb Jacob's Ladder,* and *I'll Take the Wings of the Morning,* which they found in the current Methodist hymn books, they included several other very doubtful ones because they were "sung twenty-five years ago [about 1840] in Negro camp-meetings," or because someone heard them sung by Negroes before the Civil War, or because variants of a tune were found in several states. In view of what has been shown in the earlier part of this discussion concerning white religious folk songs, it is obvious that such criteria were not at all safe. A score or more of songs about which the editors had some doubts but included as genuine Negro songs probably should have been omitted altogether.

While a great deal of the tune-borrowing in the spirituals is fragmentary, there are quite a few instances of whole tunes having been taken over. The following may be cited.

The Old Ship of Zion is a spiritual which appears in nearly all of the collections. This song is not only traditional among white people, but is found in one of their religious songsters as early as 1843.[73] It exists in two distinct versions. The 1843 published version was probably only one of several tunes then used in the revivals. It began

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[72] *Slave Songs,* p. vi.

[73] *Millennial Harp,* Supplement, p. 4.

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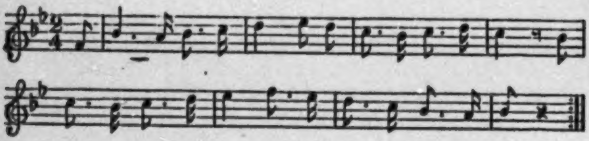

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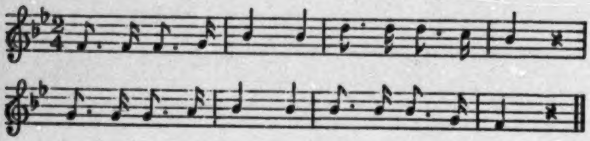
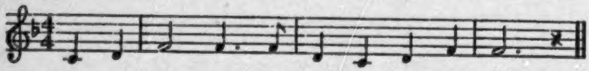
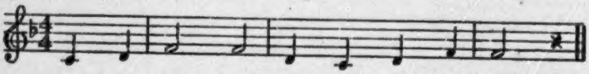
and in both words and tune it is obviously related to the Negro version, *Ol' Ship Mariah,*[74] beginning,



Another version of this tune,[75] beginning,



is the same tune as that found in one version of the spiritual *We'll Put John on the Island,*[76] and is closely akin to *Oh, Lordy, When You Come,*[77] which begins as follows:



In the same class with *Old Ship of Zion* should be mentioned several other songs which are traditional white

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[74] As sung on St. Helena Island. Ballanta's version, *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 34, is practically identical.

[75] Now rarely heard among white people, except in parodies. It is still sung in the Appalachians, however. See Richardson and Spaeth, *American Mountain Songs*, p. 71.

[76] Also sung by white people. In fact, the tunes undoubtedly were mixed before the Negroes took them over. For Negro variants see *Southern Workman*, 30, p. 590; *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro* (1924 ed.), p. 122; *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 96, 407.

[77] Sung on St. Helena Island.

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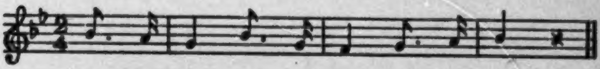
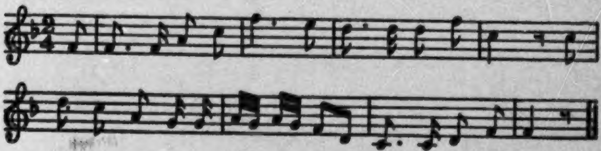
spirituals coming down from the era of the great revivals and which have most likely been borrowed by Negroes, viz., *Old Time Religion, Tell Me How You Feel When You Come Out the Wilderness, I Want to be Ready (Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John)*, and *Safe in the Promised Land (Wonder Where Is Good Old Daniel)*.

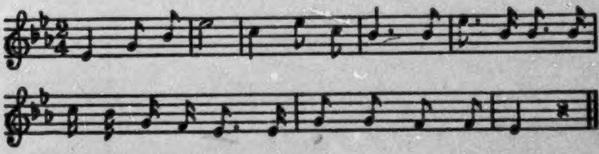
Lord, Remember Me,[78] one of the older spirituals, illustrates the way in which a song may be related to other songs. I have found two songs of this same title and sentiment in the white books.[79] The words of the chorus of one of these are like the spiritual, and the closing phrase of the tune is



The chorus of the spiritual, with closing phrase almost identical with the above phrase, is as follows:



Now the first part of this tune is the same as the chorus of another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll,*[80]



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[78] *Slave Songs*, p. 12.

[79] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42 (same as *Christian Lyre*, I, 150); and II, 64.

[80] As in Dett, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, p. 52.

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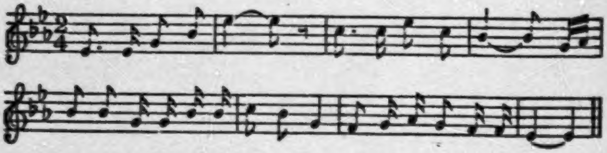
and this tune is practically identical with the chorus of *Camptown Races*, published by Stephen Foster in 1850.[81]



Krehbiel pointed out the similarity of *Lord, Remember Me* and *Camptown Races*,[82] but the more obvious connection of the latter with *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, escaped him. There have grown up various myths to the effect that Foster spent more or less time in the South and took his tunes from Negroes.[83] Foster was a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish descent. He was never South except on a brief trip down the Mississippi and possibly a visit to Kentucky, both of these occurring after he had written most of his "Ethiopian" Melodies. Krehbiel said of the *Camptown Races* tune that "it is more likely that he [Foster] invented it and that it was borrowed in part for a hymn by the Negroes." Here we have an instance of a popular song partly displacing the religious tune which the Negroes had borrowed in *Lord, Remember Me*, and being adopted into another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which was probably already being sung to another tune.

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[81] See *Heart Songs*, pp. 352-54.

[82] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, pp. 16-17.

[83] See, for example, *Negro Year Book*, 1925-26, p. 344, for a quotation (origin not given) telling how Foster journeyed South to get the tune of *Swanee River* from a Negro woman. As a matter of fact, he inserted "Swanee" in a song he had written after careful search of a map to find a name of two syllables and romantic sound. See *Stephen Collins Foster, a Biography*, by Harold Vincent Milligan, N. Y., 1920, pp. 61, 68, 72.

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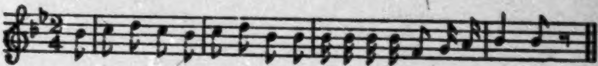
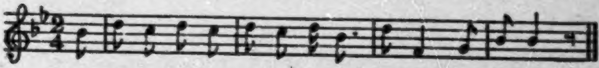
Who'll Jine de Union[84] is essentially the same as *The Christian Band*, a white song published as early as 1843.[85] The words of these two songs are about the same, except that the former uses as a refrain line "Who'll jine de union?" while the latter uses "I will be in this band, hallelujah." The following phrases, repeated, form the burden of the white song,



and the following phrases, repeated, form the stanzas of the spiritual:



The spiritual is an improvement melodically and rhythmically over the white song, but is nevertheless derived from it or from a variant of it which was never published in the white songsters.

The beautiful spiritual, *I'm a-Rolling Through an Unfriendly World*,[86] is akin to a white tune, *Judgment*, although the rhythm of the latter has been changed. There is probably a connecting link which is extinct, but the kinship becomes apparent if one neglects rhythm for the moment. The stanza tune *Judgment*,[87] with the notes

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[84] Published in *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, 1874, p. 220, and in successive editions of the Hampton songs, the latest being in Dett's edition, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 142. This song is widely known, being sung on St. Helena Island.

[85] *Millennial Harp*, II, 30. There were earlier editions of this book, also preceding volumes of a similar nature by the same editors, but I am unable to find the earliest date of their publication.

[86] See Dett, *op. cit.*, p. 186, or any other good collection of spirituals.

[87] *Christian Lyre*, I, 90. Also in *Millennial Harp*, I, 32.

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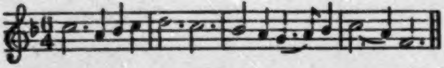
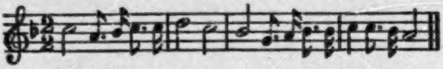
spaced to facilitate comparison with the spiritual immediately below it, is as follows:[88]

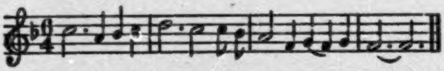
Hymn:



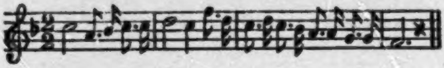
Spiritual:



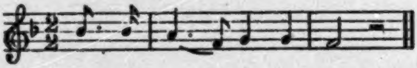
Hymn:



Spiritual:

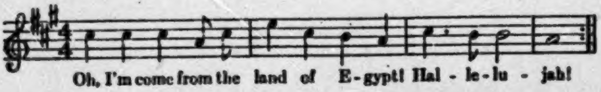


The chorus of *I'm a-Rolling* is not so closely related to *Judgment*, although the final phrase,



is the same as the final phrase of *Judgment* (see above).

The next example illustrates splendidly the possibility of relationship in both subject matter and tune between a spiritual and an old white song. The *Mariner's Hymn*,[89] as it was called in the white songsters, was made up of two simple and very similar phrases, one sung by a male voice, the other by a female voice. The latter phrase was as follows:



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[88] Incidentally, the harmonization published in the white songsters is the same as that in the spiritual.

[89] See *Millennial Harp*, II, 39.

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177 Now this tune—pentatonic, by the way—probably came
533 from some sailor song,[90] and it must have had several variants among the white people. It is no accident that when the Negroes took it over the salt water stayed with it. As *I've Been Down into the Sea*, it is one of the most beautiful spirituals sung on St. Helena.[91] The stanzas have this tune,

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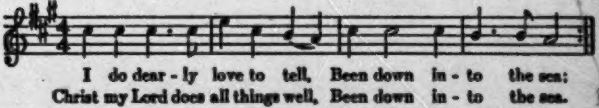
I do dear - ly love to tell, Been down in - to the sea:
Christ my Lord does all things well, Been down in - to the sea.

which is the same as the *Mariner's Hymn*, allowing for the greater number of syllables in the words of the closing measure of the spiritual. The chorus of the spiritual,

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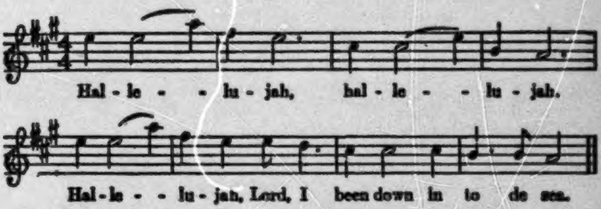
Hal - le - - lu - jah, hal - le - - lu - jah.
Hal - le - - lu - jah, Lord, I been down in to de sea.

may appear at first to be an innovation, but an examination shows it to be related to the closing tones of the stanza tune and to the following phrase from the chorus of another white song:[92]

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[90] It is similar to the hoisting chantey, *Blow, Boys, Blow*, for a version of which see *The Book of a Thousand Songs.* Incidentally, this chantey is pentatonic and is syncopated.

[91] For a published version, very similar to the St. Helena version given above, see James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, p. 172.

[92] *Don't You See My Jesus Coming?* in *Millennial Harp*, I, 62; or *The Female Pilgrim* in *The Christian Lyre*, II, 212. The tune is pentatonic.

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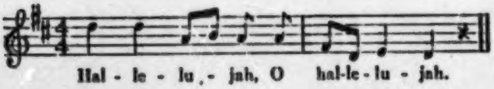
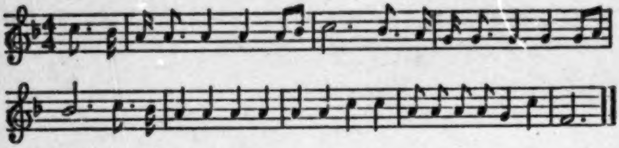
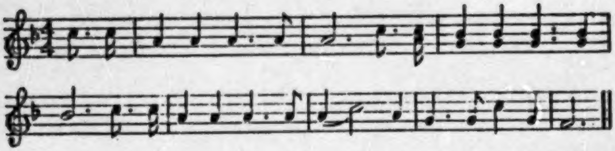


The tune of a white song *My Brother, I Wish You Well* is so much like the tune of the spiritual *There's a Meeting Here Tonight* that there was probably a connection between them. The white tune is as follows:[93]



The chorus of the spiritual is as follows:[94]



The spiritual *Just Now,*[95] formerly sung in the upper South, but rarely heard now, was taken, both words and tune, from the white hymn, *Come to Jesus,*[96] How perfectly the Negro learned the song is indicated by the tunes below. The first is the white hymn, the second the spirit-

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[93] *Millennial Harp*, I, 47.

[94] Alternative notes are shown in several measures because this phrase is sung both ways. See *Slave Songs*, p. 9, for two variants; also *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 182.

[95] See *Slave Songs*, p. 67. The editors thought that this became a Methodist hymn *after* the Negroes started it, and they included it because it was sung by Negroes in Maryland 25 years before. It was already at that time an Adventist hymn.

[96] *Millennial Harp*, I, 63.

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ual. The first stanza of the white hymn has exactly the same words as the third stanza of the Negro song.[7]

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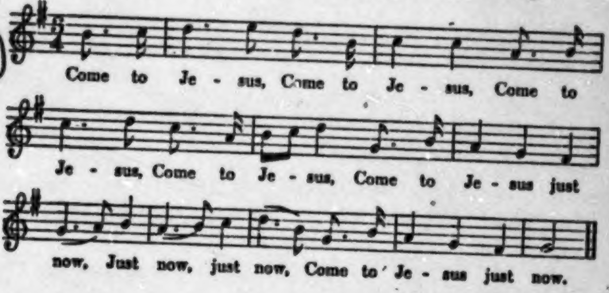
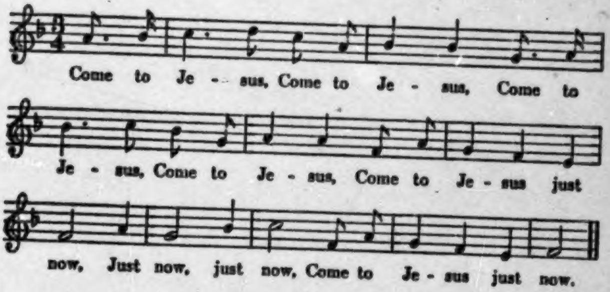

Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to
Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus just
now, Just now, just now, Come to Je - sus just now.


Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to
Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus just
now, Just now, just now, Come to Je - sus just now.

The task of identifying two tunes which are related is a thrilling one, but is very teasing and elusive. One might come across a spiritual tune which unmistakably suggests an old white tune, yet one may be unable to find the white tune without hours and hours of search. Sometimes the words and music throughout are similar, as in some of the cases cited above, and it is easy to find the tune wanted. Sometimes there is a slight clue in the

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[7] In another stanza the white song has "Get religion just now," while the Negro song has "Good religion just now."

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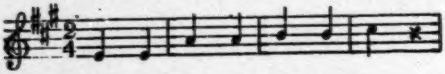
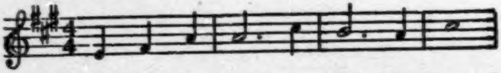
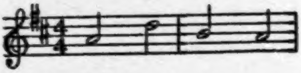
words of the spiritual which throws light on its origin. For example, in Nettleton's *Village Hymns*,[98] which contains words only, there is a song beginning "Angel, roll the rock away." There is a spiritual known as *De Angel Rolled de Stone Away*.[99] The white song is noted as sung to a tune called Hampton. In another hymn book[100] we find this tune to entirely different words. The opening strain is



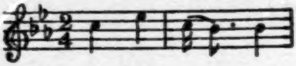
The spiritual begins in a very similar way:



and three of the four phrases in the spirituals are made up of this strain. To cite another example, several white songs contained the expression, "ride on, Jesus," and one for which the tune is available has the following phrase on the words, "ride on, Jesus."[101]



The spiritual, *Ride on, Jesus*, has the same phrase:[102]



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[98] P. 117.

[99] See *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 80, for a published version.

[100] *Christian Lyre*, II, 20.

[101] *Millennial Harp*, I, 52.

[102] Natalie Curtis Burlin, *Negro Folk-Songs*, Book I, No. 1; also *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 92.

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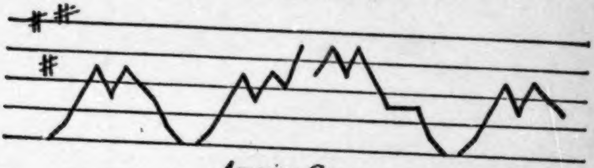
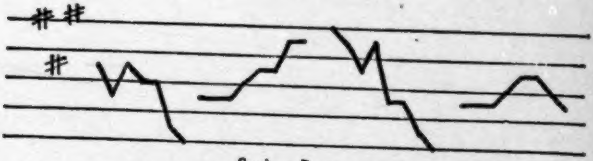
The rhythmic changes which took place in the songs borrowed from white people are significant. They account for some of the difficulty one encounters in tracing melodic parallels. To cite an instance of this sort: there is evidence that, omitting rhythmic factors, the old favorite, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,* is a variant of one of the tunes of *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound.* The following tune graph, which represents the melody but neglects tempo, shows this possibility.[103]



Amazing Grace



Swing Low

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The examples cited above illustrate various types of borrowing: (1) both tune and words borrowed with very little alteration; (2) tune alone borrowed, and melodic or rhythmic adaptations introduced by Negroes; (3) a short phrase of a white tune used as the basis for a spiritual tune,

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[103] In this connection I might state that R. W. Gordon, of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Library of Congress, told me that he has a traditional white version of *Swing Low.* This may be a connecting link between *Amazing Grace* and the spiritual. I am aware that it has recently been claimed that the original tune of *Swing Low* has been found in Africa, but I consider the claim of no value until some direct evidence is presented.

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with characteristic rhythmic changes. While some of the borrowed spirituals appear on the face to be more or less "spurious," others, such as *Roll, Jordan, Roll, I'm a-Rolling, I've Been Down Into de Sea,* etc., are among the best of Negro songs.

The question at once comes up, how important are these cases statistically? That is difficult to say, but the situation may be summed up in this way: out of 82 tunes in Part I and Part II of the songster, *Millennial Harp,* ten, or one-eighth, may be traced in whole or in part into the spirituals. If this one book, which contains a mere sprinkling of the really folksy white songs, can account for so many spirituals, the chances are very high that, if the total range of white religious folk tunes were available, the proportion of tunes which crossed over into the spirituals would be surprisingly large. Of more importance than the statistical factor, however, is the fact that there are borrowed tunes among the spirituals which are in no way distinguishable from the rest of the spiritual tunes. Thus we have additional confirmation of the findings indicated previously, namely, that, with the exception of rhythm and possibly larger use of the pentatonic scale, the spirituals are not different musically from white folk tunes.

If, in addition to these considerations, it be remembered that this study has not attempted to explore the vast possibilities of specific borrowings from the popular ballads, play songs, and nursery songs brought to this country from England, nor from early American popular music and later minstrel music;[104] that numerous

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[104] To indicate possibilities, note the similarity of a part of *In Bright Mansions Above* and *Wearing of the Green;* and the likeness of *Steal Away* to *Farmer's in the Dell.*

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songs known as spirituals by the Negroes survive in the white folk tradition as white songs;[105] and that instances are known of a white man's having composed spirituals for Negroes;[106] it will be seen that the story of the origin of the spirituals has only begun to be written. But the data yielded by even a small segment of white religious folk songs seem to indicate that the anthropological question as to what happened when the Negro, with a system of music admittedly different, came into contact with white music in the master-slave relationship, deserves an answer similar to that given in regard to dialect, namely, that the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed from white folk music.

To claim that the Negro took all of the spirituals from white tunes, that he has contributed nothing himself, would be stupid. There are undoubtedly spirituals of Negro composition, there are some white songs of Negro origin, and there are probably a few tunes which came from Africa. Furthermore, the instances of borrowing show that Negroes usually made rhythmic changes in the tunes they borrowed. But, if the several possible theories concerning [178 the spirituals be listed as follows: (1) they are derived directly from Africa, (2) they are of American Negro origin,

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[105] For example, Howard W. Odum says that *We're Goin' to End This Warfare (Down by the River)* was sung in Georgia during his youth as a white camp-meeting song. For data along this line, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, Chaps. I, II, and Appendix III; and Pound, "The Ancestry of a Negro Spiritual," *Modern Language Notes*, 33, pp. 442-4.

[106] Henry C. Work, a white abolitionist, wrote *Kingdom's Coming*, *Freedom Over Me*, and *Babylon is Fallen*. See *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 51, 170. In this connection I might also point out that art songs of recent origin are even now in process of becoming "adopted" as Negro spirituals, examples being *Deep River* and *Going Home*, the latter based on a movement of Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.

based on African patterns, (3) they are selections from 177
white music, selections influenced by the Negro's African 178
musical heritage, (4) they are largely borrowed directly 533
from white folk music, as attested by the presence of the same traits to about the same extent in both musics; then it is seen that either of the latter two theories is more plausible than the former two.

There has been so much sentimentalizing on the spirituals that it will be difficult for some people to accept such a conclusion. The various statements of the "romantic" origins of the spirituals, of their being "America's only indigenous folk song," of their springing "ready made from the white heat of religious fervor," may be interesting as sentiments, but as scientific points of view on a question of musical relationships they are worthless. It is to be hoped that those who are convinced of the African origin of the spirituals will look closely into their English-American background before they embrace their conclusions.

And what does it all come to? On the scientific side, it appears that Wallaschek was substantially correct in his judgment after all.[107] The Negro's contribution seems to have been the introduction of his own rhythmic devices, the elaboration, sometimes the simplification, of the melodic patterns of white songs, and the preservation of a large body of folk song which might otherwise have been extinct by now.

On the artistic and appreciative side, it should mean 533
nothing—that is, nothing which should change anyone's appreciation or enjoyment of the Negro spiritual. As it

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[107] See *supra*, p. 73.

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533 is found today among Negroes, it is indeed as unique, as distinctive as if it were unreservedly the creation of these people. As White has well said, "The white man would be both stupid and prejudiced if he failed to see that the Negro has long since made it his own."[108]

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[108] *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 57.

III

FOLKLORE FROM ST. HELENA ISLAND

INTRODUCTION

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In the Sea Islands one may hear stories and superstitions that are rooted in the far distant childhood of the human race, folklore from Africa, Asia, Spain, England, and other parts of the globe. Story-telling is not a lost art with the Negroes. A stranger may have some difficulty in getting them started, but after he has lived among them for a while he meets with immediate response to any request for stories, riddles, "toasts," and the like.

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In her book, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Elsie Clews Parsons has brought together nearly 200 stories, numerous riddles, proverbs, rhymes, etc., the majority of which were collected on St. Helena Island. Mrs. Parsons' stay in the Sea Islands was very brief, but she collected a remarkable amount of material. Such shortcomings as her book shows are insignificant and are due to the difficulty of getting accurate data without living for a longer period among the people. For example, she said of a certain opening rhyme used in the Bahama Negro tales, that there was no trace of it in the sea-island stories. I found this rhyme to be fairly common on St. Helena and on Ladies Island, but I had been there nearly two months before I ever heard of it.

Mrs. Parsons thought that song, as a part of the narrative, "is passing or has passed out" in the Southern States. She recorded only six or seven instances of stories with sung portions. I found about three times as many,

114 and I believe that a diligent search among the less sophisticated
538 islanders will reveal about as high a proportion of this type of story as is found in the Bahamas and West Indies.

114 Mrs. Parsons also believed that obscene turns, so common
538 in the Bahamas, were "quite lacking in Carolina." This might have been true as far as she could tell, for the
831 Negroes were undoubtedly inhibited in the presence of a woman collector. I found their stories and riddles quite rich in *double entente* and obscene turns, and the most vulgar story I heard was told me by a 16-year-old school girl. Many stories have their "other" versions. On several occasions, men or boys told the conventional versions if girls were present, and then took me aside to tell me the tabooed versions. These were often merely risqué or vulgar rather than truly obscene, but there was plenty of the latter to disprove Mrs. Parsons' idea. Indeed, whether she knows it or not, her book contains a considerable quantity of vulgar folklore.

Because of the existence of Mrs. Parsons' excellent
538 book, it is unnecessary to give in detail in the present report
128 all of the folklore collected on St. Helena Island. A few typical stories, riddles, beliefs, etc., are sufficient here.
538 For further details and for a larger bibliography of Negro folklore, one may consult Mrs. Parsons' work.
113 *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, companion volumes to this one, contain much valuable material relating to folkways on St. Helena Island.

FOLK TALES

538 171 The folk stories of St. Helena Island represent several different heritages. Undoubtedly the majority of the stories were brought there by Negroes, but not all of them are native African stories. Some appear to have been carried from the Iberian Peninsula or from the Cape Verde Islands by sailors to West Africa, whence they were brought by the Negroes to the United States. Others are of Asiatic descent, having been taken into Africa long before the slave trade began. Still others were European tales learned by the Negroes in the West Indies and brought by them into the Southern States when they were sold to the early planters on the Carolina and Georgia coast. Added to these are European tales brought over by the English settlers or imported more recently by other Europeans. The culture of the sea-island Negroes is, therefore, singularly rich in folk stories.

538 171 175 567 As Mrs. Parsons has pointed out, there is a close kinship, not only in type of story and subject matter, but in dialect and idiom, between the St. Helena tales and the folk stories told by the Negroes of the Bahamas. The relationship is not accidental, for there was a cross-migration between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. West Indian and other island planters are known to have moved to South Carolina and Georgia, bringing slaves with them, and in the early plantation days in these colonies, the planters preferred the seasoned slaves of the West Indies over the raw Africans. On the other hand, the turn of political events in the American colonies caused some, particularly the United Loyalists, to move to the Bahamas and other islands, taking their households with them.

000 them.

538 An example of kinship is found in the habit of opening a story with
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Once upon a time, a very good time,
Monkey chaw tobacco an' spit white lime,

or

Monkey chaw tobacco an' goose drink wine,

or some other variant of this rhyme, which is found on St. Helena as well as in the Bahamas. Of this type of opening Mrs. Parsons said, "There was no trace in the Carolina tales." Its use is rather common, however, especially on Ladies Island, adjoining St. Helena. It is one of those things which are stored in memory and are not used unless some train of association sets them off. A group of boys were telling stories. All of a sudden, one of them recalled this old nominee and began his story with it. Immediately the others wanted to give their versions of it, and in less than a minute half a dozen variations of this opening rhyme had been contributed.

There are also many points of similarity between the sea-island tales and the African folk stories. For example, the hare or rabbit, an important animal in the folklore of many peoples, plays the same role in the African tales that he does in the sea-island tales. He nearly always outwits the other animals by his cunning, deceit, and trickery. No one could read works like Chatelain's *Folk Tales of Angola*, Dennett's *Folk-lore of the Fjort*, or Nassau's *Where Animals Talk*, without concluding that a great many of the African tales have come into our country with very little change except that which was necessitated by the adaptation to English culture.

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The charm of the stories told by the Negroes lies as much in the way they are told as in the stories themselves. As Mrs. Parsons has said, "The characteristic emphasis of Negro tales, the drawl, and the tricks of speeding up, are difficult to indicate on paper. Italics and exclamation points are but feeble indicators; and how can one express by printers' signs the significance of what is not said?—a significance conveyed by manner or by quietness of intonation, of which a good story-teller is past master." Stripped of the tricks of the story-teller and of the dialect in which they are told, and written down in good English, these tales make slow reading.

To the student of folklore, this vast body of stories is something to be collected, preserved, studied, compared, analyzed, something which it would be a shame to let die out. But to the Negroes these stories are like any other stories. They lie tucked away in memory most of the time. Occasionally they are called forth to do their bit toward entertaining the teller and his listeners. New stories, perhaps cheap stories, are constantly crowding in upon them, and if some of the old-time ones which go back almost to Adam slip out of memory through disuse, no tears are shed. Finding a rare tale may thrill the collector, but the islanders may think something else is far more valuable. To them a story of a stuttering slave's being beaten up by a stuttering Irish patrol because the Irishman thought the Negro was mocking him may be much more attractive than Buh Rabbit's victory over Buh Lion.

The folklorist may complain that the art of story-telling is dying, but he must admit that the old stories

538 are safe for some time yet among the Negroes of the Sea Islands. The older people rarely tell the stories to white people, it is true, but the children tell them naïvely and with plenty of skill. On the way to school, at recess time, at parties, at home around the fireside, or at work, the young folk tell stories and riddles. They may deviate from the traditional version of a tale, but they are good at supplying new incidents and at combining several stories to make a new one. If part of a story is supposed to be sung, they sing it rather than recite it as many adults would do. If Buh Rabbit is supposed to make a funny noise as he runs down the road, this is supplied with an ingenuity which attempts to outdo the other fellow.

In the following tales the language is, as a rule, that of a person who speaks a somewhat modified sea-island dialect. It happens that none of the stories given here was told me by the old-time mushy-mouthed type of speaker. This is fortunate for the average reader, for the pure dialect is quite difficult to read. Since different speakers have different peculiarities, the reader must not be surprised at the apparent lack of consistency in dialect.

I

539
DOG AND DOG HEAD[1]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Frog all-two go fo' hunt deah. Dey need some dog, an' a dog cost twelve biscuit. Buh

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[1] From Eustis School, Ladies Island. This is one of the most popular stories in the Sea Islands. For other variants, see Parsons' *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, pp. 1-5. The following is the most common variant: Rabbit sees Frog's "t'roat gwine up an' down," and thinks Frog is eating his biscuits, so Rabbit decides to eat some of his. Frog arrives with all of his biscuits, but Rabbit has only a few left and has to be content with a dog head. Sometimes, Frog uses the mock plea and tricks Rabbit into admitting that his dog head did not catch the deer.

Frog got plenty biscuit, so 'e buy one dog, but Buh Rabbit been uh eat some o' his an' ain' got but six lef', so 'e buy one dog haid. So dey go fo' hunt deah, an' dey ain' gone too long 'fo' Buh Frog dog run attah a deah and ketch um. Buh Rabbit run ahaid an' knock off Buh Frog dog an' put e' dog haid on de deah. W'en Buh Frog come up, Buh Rabbit say, "Look, Buh Frog, my dog haid done kill a deah." Buh Frog say, "Now, Buh Rabbit, you know dog haid cyan' kill deah. Tek a dog fo' kill deah." Buh Rabbit say, "O, man, course a dog haid can ketch a deah. Yunnah shum deh on de deah, enty? Tek a dog haid fo' ketch deah. If yunnah want to ketch deah, yunnah have to cut yo' dog haid off." Buh Frog say, I guess you right, Buh Rabbit." So Buh Frog cut 'e dog haid off, an' dog haid ain' never ketch no mo' deah since dat.

I step on a tin,
De tinnin ben',
Dat's de way
My story en'.

II

THE FALSE MESSAGE: TAKE MY PLACE[2]

Once upon a time de goose run blin',
Monkey chaw tobacco an' de cat drink wine.

'Bout de man, de lee' gal, and Buh Rabbit. Man have a pease patch an' lef' lee' gal fuh watch um. Buh Rabbit come up an' say, 'Mornin', lee' gal. Yo' paa say tu'n me in pease patch at twelve an' tu'n me out at five." Lee' gal say, "All right, Buh Rabbit," so she tu'n Buh Rabbit in de pease patch. 'E eat an' eat, an' when five come 'e say to lee' gal, "Time to tu'n me out." She tu'n 'im out. When 'e paa come home 'e say, "Who been in my pease patch?" Lee' gal say, "Buh Rabbit say you sen' word fuh me to tu'n 'im in de pease patch." 'E paa say, "Well, if Buh Rabbit come tomorrow, you tu'n 'im in an' don' let 'im out till I come."

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[2] See also Parsons, pp. 40-2.

So nex' day Buh Rabbit come, an' de lee' gal tu'n 'im in de pease patch. 'E eat an' eat, an' den 'e say, "Lee gal, time to tu'n me out." Lee' gal say, "I busy now." Buh Rabbit wait awhile. Says, "Please let me out now." Lee' gal say, "Wait a minute, I too busy now." Den 'e paa come home. 'E ketch Buh Rabbit in de pease patch an' tek an' lock 'im up in a cyage, den 'e gwine off fuh git a cyaa't-load o' switch fuh beat Buh Rabbit. Buh Wolf come along an' see Buh Rabbit in de cyage an' ax 'im, "What you do deh, Buh Rabbit?" Buh Rabbit say, "Oh, man, dey gwine be beeg time tonight—beeg party, singin' an' dancin' an' eatin'. Don' you wanna help?" Buh Wolf say, "Sho', man, let me in." "All right, onlock dat do' an' come in." Buh Wolf onlock de do' an' come in de cyage. Buh Rabbit jump out and lock 'im up. Man come back, say, "Buh Wolf, what you do in deh?" "Oh, Buh Rabbit say we gwine have beeg time." Man say, "Yes, we sho' is gwine have beeg time," an' 'e tek de cyaa't-load o' switch an' beat Buh Wolf mos' to deat'.

III

PLAYING GODFATHER: TUB OF BUTTER[8]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf been frien'. Day hab tub o' buttah fuh eat w'en wintah come. Dey wukkin' een de fiel' w'en Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Wolf, me yeddy my sistah duh call me. I gwine see w'at 'e want." So 'e went off. Attah w'ile 'e come back. Buh Wolf say, "W'at yo' sistah want?" "Oh, my sistah hab a fine baby an' 'e want me fuh name um." "Well, w'at you name um?" "I name um Buh Start-um."

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[8] From a student in Penn School. See Parsons, pp. 5-8. Sometimes the names of the children are varied, as, for example, Begin-um, Buh Quartah-um, T'ree-fourt' Gone-um, Mos' Done-um, etc.

Dey wuk a lee' wile, den Buh Rabbit say, "Lissen to dat! My sistah duh call me ag'in. I wish 'e leave me 'lone." Buh Wolf say, "Man, you bettah go see w'at 'e want." So Buh Rabbit go off again. Fin'ly 'e come back, say, "Buh Wolf, my sistah done hab 'nuddah baby an' want me to name um." "Well, w'at you name um?" "Oh, I name um Buh Half-um."

Dey wuk a lee' w'ile mo' an' den Buh Rabbit say, "Lissen, Buh Wolf, my sistah duh call me again. I t'ink I not go dis time." Buh Wolf say, "Oh, man, I t'ink you bettah go." "All right, I be back in a lee' w'ile." Fin'ly Buh Rabbit come back, say, "Law, Buh Wolf, my sistah done hab 'nuddah chile." "W'at you name um dis time?" "Oh, I name um Buh Done-um." Dat mean 'e done eat all de buttah.

Dey wuk on till Buh Wolf say, "Buh Rabbit, le's go see 'bout dat tub o' buttah." So dey go fuh git buttah an' de buttah all gone. Buh Wolf say, "Buh Rabbit, you been uh eat de buttah, enty?" "No, 'fo' Gawd, Buh Wolf, I yent eat um." Buh Wolf say, "I t'ink we fin' out who eat 'um. We gwine een de sun an' lay down, an' de one de sun melt de buttah out ob, 'e de one wuh eat um." Buh Rabbit agree, so dey go een de hot sun an' lay down. Buh Wolf go to sleep. De butter melt out o' Buh Rabbit, an' 'e take an' smear um on Buh Wolf. Den 'e wake up Buh

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539 Wolf an' say, "Look, Buh Wolf, de buttah melt out on you. Dat prove you eat um." Buh Wolf say, "Yeah, Buh Rabbit, I guess you been right. I eat um fo' trute."

IV

WHO STOLE BUH KINLAW'S GOAT?[4]

Once upon a time de cat drink wine,
De monkey chaw tobacco on de street-car line.

Deh been a man name Buh Kinlaw. Buh Rabbit t'ief Buh Kinlaw goat, an' Buh Kinlaw gwine hab court fuh fin' who t'ief um. So Buh Rabbit see Buh Wolf an' say, "Buh Wolf, deh's t'irty dollahs on a song, t'irty dollahs on a song. Big time on court day. You bass me on de song an' we make a heap o' money. Now, w'en I sing,

[Chanted] Buh Wolf t'ief Buh Kinlaw goat,

you sing,

Yes, indeed, indeed I did."

So Buh Wolf agree, an' dey try out de song till dey can sing um good.

W'en de court day come, Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf come in to town. W'en dey come close to de court place, Buh Rabbit say, "All right, Buh Wolf, time to staa't singin'"; an' 'e begin:

"Buh Wolf t'ief Buh Kinlaw goat,"

an' Buh Wolf come in strong on

"Yes, indeed, indeed I did."

So de jedge yeddy um an' say, "So dat's de man wuh stole Buh Kinlaw goat." An 'e gib Buh Wolf t'irty days 'stead o' t'irty dollahs.

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[4] *Cf.* Parsons, p. 145.

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V

THE PARSON'S SHEEP

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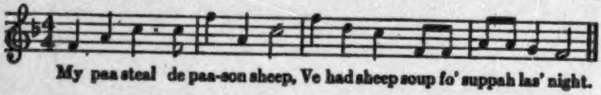
Once dere was a li'l boy, an' 'e paa stole de paa'son sheep, so de boy sing,

"My paa steal de paa'son sheep,
Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

[533)


My paa steal de paa-son sheep, Ve had sheep soup fo' suppah las' night.

De paa'son yea'd um singin'. Say, "What dat you sing, son?" "Oh, nuttin', suh." "Well, you come heah tomorrow dis same time an' sing dat same song, an' I give you ten dollahs." "All right, suh."

So dat night de boy tell his paa, say, "Paa, man gwine give me ten dollah fuh sing tomorrow." Paa say, "Le' me hear you sing um, son." De boy sing:

"My paa stole de paa'son sheep,
Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

'E paa knock 'im down, *Bam!* Den 'e say, "Son, sing um ag'in." Boy sing um dat same way ag'in. 'E paa knock 'im down ag'in. "Sing um ag'in, son." So dis time de boy sing:

"My paa went a-fishin' last night,
Vee had fish soup fuh suppah las' night."

'E paa say, "Now dat's de way to sing um, son. Anybody ax you fuh sing, you sing um same like dat."

Nex' day de boy go to de place whuh paa'son say come. Paa'son deh wid lots o' oddah mens. De paa'son say, "All right, son, sing dat song." So de boy sing:

"My paa went a-fishin' last night,
Vee had fish soup fuh suppah las' night."

Paa'son say, "Dat's not de song you sing d' oddah time." Boy say, "Yes, suh, dat him." Paa'son say, "Try um ag'in." An de' boy sing um dat same way ag'in. Paa'son ax him, "Don' you know anoddah song!" "No, suh, dat de only song I evah sung, suh." So de people made paa'son give de boy ten dollah like 'e promise.

VI

RABBIT SEEKS A WIFE[8]

De king had a fine daughtah. Buh Rabbit ax king fo' 'e daughtah. King say, "If you git me one bag o' blackbird, one rattlesnake tush an' one alligator tush, you will hab my daughtah."

So Buh Rabbit go down de road singin',

"Ding, ding, ding, a-ding, ding, ding,
Ding-a ding, ding, ding."

He see some blackbird een a fiel' singin', so he take a bag an' say, "Heh, you blackbird, up deh singin' so big, I bet you cyan' full dis bag." De blackbird fly een de bag, an' Buh Rabbit tie de string an' take de bag to de king. King tell 'im, "You a smaa't man, Buh Rabbit. Now git me de rattlesnake tush."

Buh Rabbit meet Buh Rattlesnake. Say, "Good mornin', Buh Rattlesnake. You sho' is growin' mighty big. Le' me meadger you wid dis stick to see how long you is." Buh Rattlesnake lay down 'side de stick and Buh Rabbit tie 'e tail to de stick. "Wha' fuh you tie my tail, Buh Rabbit?" "Oh, man, I haffuh tie you' tail to straight you out so 's I can meadger you good." Den he tie Buh Rattlesnake haid an' pull de string tight an' choke 'im to deat'. He take out de tush an' take um to de king. King say, "Buh Rabbit, you *too* smaa't. Now bring me de alligatuh tush."

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[8] Told by James Henderson, Eddings' Point School. Cf. Parsons, p. 14.

Buh Rabbit go down to de pon' an' fin' Buh 'Gatuh an' call out, "Oh, Buh 'Gatuh, come up hyuh on de sho'. Gwine hab beeg time up hyuh." 'Gatuh come up. Buh Rabbit say, "Now we play a lee' game." An' 'e sing:

"Go t'rough my legs swif'ly, O,
An' come back slowly, O."

Buh 'Gatuh go t'rough swif'ly, an' w'en he come back slowly, Buh Rabbit knock 'im wid a stick. 'Gatuh pitch een to de pon', say, "Buh Rabbit, you *too* mean." Buh Rabbit study 'bout how he could git Buh 'Gatuh to come out again. Fin'ly he go off an' kill a squirrel an' dress up in de squirrel clo'es. He come back to de pon' an' sing,

"Ding, ding, ding, a-ding, ding, ding,
Ding, a-ding, ding, ding."

Buh 'Gatuh say, "I t'ink I hear Buh Rabbit woice." Buh Rabbit say, "Come on up, Buh 'Gatuh. It's me, Buh Squirrel." 'Gatuh wife tell 'im, "Don' go up deh. You might get hurt." 'Gatuh call out, "Dat you, Buh Squirrel?" "Yeah, come on up." Buh 'Gatuh come up on sho'. He say, "Dat Buh Rabbit a *mean* man. He knocked me wid a stick. But I glad he yent hit me on dis side, 'caze I would-a daid." So Buh Rabbit take a stick an' knock 'im on dat side and kill 'im daid. Den he take out de tush an' take um to de king. De king tell 'im, "Man, you *too* smaa't." Buh Rabbit say, "Eider gib me yo'

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539 daughtah or gib me trouble." De king say, "I'll gib you trouble." So he gib Buh Rabbit a bag an' tell 'im, "Don' open um till you come to a wide fiel'." So Buh Rabbit go off to a wide open fiel' an' open de bag. An' w'en he loose um, out jump t'ree houn' dog right attah Buh Rabbit. One o' de dog bit Buh Rabbit tail smack off, an' his tail been short to dis day.

VII

LION SEES HIS SHADOW

Buh Lion been king o' de beas'. D' oddah animals 'fraid to walk, 'caze Buh Lion eat um if 'e ketch um. So one day dey hol' a council an' 'cide to mek a 'greement wid Buh Lion to sen' 'im one of um fuh eb'ry meal if 'e leabe um alone 'tween meal.

W'en it come Buh Rabbit time to go fuh let Buh Lion eat 'im, ' e staa't off sad an' slow-like. 'E tek two step frontwa'd, one step backwa'd, an' 'e been a-study all de time. Buh Lion gittin' mighty hungry, 'caze Buh Rabbit due at twelve o'clock an' it already 'bout t'ree. Fin'ly Buh Lion see li'l cloud o' dus' way down de road. Say, "Dat mus' be Buh Rabbit comin'." Buh Rabbit tek two step frontwa'd an' one step backwa'd. Buh Lion bex. 'E call out, "Hurry up, Buh Rabbit. Why you so late?" "Oh, man, I been a-study 'bout dat oddah lion. I shum [saw him] down een a well back deh on de road. Him say him can beat you all to pieces." Buh Lion too mad. Say, "Dey ain' no body can beat me." Buh Rabbit say, "Dat w'at I tol' 'im, but 'e look mighty fierce an' say 'e can tear you up." "Tek me to 'im, Buh Rabbit. I wan' a-shum." So Buh Rabbit tek 'im to de well, an' Buh Lion look down een de watah an' see 'eself. 'E give a roah an'

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shake 'e haid, an' de lion een de well done de same. Eb'y-t'ing 'e do, de lion een de well do likewise. Buh Lion git so mad, 'e jump at 'e shadow een de well, an' 'e got drownded.

VIII

LION LOOKS FOR MAN

'Bout Buh Elephan', Buh Lion, an' Man. Buh Elephan' sleep undah tree, an' Man cut de tree, an' it fall on Buh Elephan' an' hu't 'im. Buh Lion come along an' say, "What de mattah, Buh Elephan'?" "Man cut de tree on me." "Man? W'at Man look like?" "Well, 'e got two t'ing long down, call um laig; two t'ing long out, call um han'." "You t'ink I c'n ketch um?" "Yah, you c'n ketch um."

So Buh Lion go hunt fuh Man. Fin'ly 'e shum. Say, "You de t'ing dey call Man?" "Yah, I de t'ing dey call Man." "Well, w'at I mus' do to make you fight me?" Man tell um, "Tu'n yo' back an' tu'n yo' shu't-tail ovah yo' haid, an' I fight you." So Buh Lion t'un 'e back an' tu'n 'e shu't-tail ovah 'e haid, an' Man take 'e gun an' shoot Buh Lion.

Finally Buh Lion got up an' went to fin' Buh Elephan'. Say, "Oh, Buh Elephan', you know dat t'ing dey call Man?" "Yah." "Well, Man ruled by God. I ax um w'at I must do to make um fight me, an' 'e tu'n my back an' tu'n my shu't-tail ovah my haid, an' 'e t'row a t'ousan' poun' o' grabbel on me, den 'e jerk out my rib an' cut me till I fall."

IX

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PLAYING DEAD IN THE ROAD[6]

Once a man been fishin' an' had a cyaart load o' fish. Buh Rabbit lay down side o' de road like 'e daid. De cyaart go by, an' den Buh Rabbit run t'rough de woods an' lay down 'side de road again. Cyaart come along an' de man say, "How come so many rabbit daid een de road today. If I see anudder one, I pick um up." Buh Rabbit run roun' an' lay down 'side de road again. W'en de man come along he say, "I never see so many daid rabbit. I t'ink I bigin to pick um up." So he pick up Buh Rabbit an' t'row 'im up on de cyaart wid de fish.

Buh Rabbit t'row off fish an' t'row off fish till he got all he want, den he jump off an' go back an' pick up de fish an' take um home. Buh Wolf come along an' see all de fish. He want to know how Buh Rabbit got um. Buh Rabbit say, "Man, I play like I daid, an' de man put me on de cyaart, and I t'row off de fish." So nex' day Buh Wolf done de same trick. De man stopped de cyaart, say, "Well, Buh Rabbit fool me dat way, but you no fool me," an' he beat Buh Wolf to deat' an' carry 'im home fo' he chillun.

X

FATAL IMITATION[7]

Buh Rabbit see Buh Pa'tridge one day, an' Buh Pa'tridge had 'e haid undah 'e wing. Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Pa'tridge, weh yo' haid?" Buh Pa'tridge mek answer, "I leff um at home, Buh Rabbit." "You leff um

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[6] From Edisto Island. An unusual variant of "Playing Dead Twice in the Road," which is quite popular in the Bahamas, according to Parsons, but which she failed to find in the Sea Islands. See *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, p. 44.

[7] *Cf.* Parsons, pp. 33-5.

at home! How come you do dat?" "Well," say Buh Pa'tridge, "I jes' leabe um deh so my wife can comb um w'ile I been gone." Buh Rabbit say, "Dat soun's mighty good, Buh Pa'tridge. Tell me how you do it." "Well, you jes' ax yo' wife fo' cut yo' haid off, den you can leabe yo' haid at home an' go widout it like me."

So Buh Rabbit run home an' say to 'e wife, "Wife, I see Buh Pa'tridge run roun' widout 'e haid, an' 'e say you mus' cut my haid off so I can do dat way myse'f." Wife say, "Now, I 'fraid Buh Pa'tridge been try fo' fool you." "Oh, no. You mus' tek de ax an' chop my haid off like Buh Pa'tridge say." So dey argue an' argue till fin'ly Buh Rabbit have 'e way, and 'e put 'e haid down on de block and 'e wife tek de ax an' bam! off come 'e haid. An' Buh Rabbit been jes' as daid as 'e can be.

XI

RABBIT MAKES WOLF HIS SADDLE HORSE[8]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf been great frien'. Dey git ready to go to big party to dance an' play wid all de gal. Buh Rabbit been tellin' de gal dat Buh Wolf been his saddle horse. W'en de time come to go, Buh Rabbit say, "Lawd, Buh Wolf, I feel so bad I t'ink I cyan' go." Buh Wolf say, "You got to go, Buh Rabbit. Le' me carry you paart o' de way." Buh Rabbit say, "All right, if you let me put de saddle on you so 's I can hold on." Buh Wolf say he agree p'vidin' he take de saddle off befo' dey git to de party. So Buh Rabbit git his saddle an' spurs, an' off dey go. Attah w'ile w'en dey git up close to de place weh de party gwine be, Buh Wolf say, "Time to git off, Buh

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[8] From Eustis School, Ladies Island. *Cf.* Parsons, pp. 53-4.

Rabbit." But Buh Rabbit dig de spurs in Buh Wolf, and Buh Wolf howl an' run right up to de house befo' all de gal. Buh Rabbit call out, "See! See! Ain' I tol' you Buh Wolf been my saddle horse?"

XII

THE RACE BETWEEN SNAIL AND DEER

Buh Deah been a-boas' dat he de fastes' runnah een de worl'. Buh Snail say, "Buh Deah, I t'ink I run a race wid you." Dey all laugh at Buh Snail, but he say he want to try to beat Buh Deah, so dey 'p'inted de day fo' de race. Buh Deah come to de place weh dey gwine staart, but he not see Buh Snail. But Buh Snail, he deh, an' he crawl up easy-like undah Buh Deah tail. Fin'ly Buh Deah say, "Well, I wondah weh is dat Snail. I guess he don' wan' a-run no race." Buh Snail speak up an' say, "I'm hyuh, let de race staart." Buh Deah went sailin' off down de road, an' soon he come to de finish place. Big crowd deh. Buh Deah say, "Hab anybody seen dat Snail?" Dey all laugh an' say dey ain' shum. So Buh Deah staart to set down, an' Buh Snail cry out, "Man, git up off-a me. I been hyuh long befo' you." So dey give de race to Buh Snail.

XIII

THE MERMAID[9]

De King wife dead an' King marry 'nodder woman. King had daughter an' dis woman had daughter, an' dey treat her daughter good, but not treat de King daughter good. She have to do hard work, an' de odder gal do nuttin'. So de po' gal go down to de water an' cry. Mermaid rise up an' say, "What you cry for, li'l gal?" "My mudder die an' my fadder marry ag'in an' my step-mudder have daughter. Dey treat me bad an' won' give me 'nough t' eat." De mermaid say, "Come down wid me." She take her down under de water to de purties' place. Give her all kin' o' good t'ing t' eat. Den she bring her back up. Dat night, de gal not want a bite t' eat after de odders done eat, but she feel so glad.

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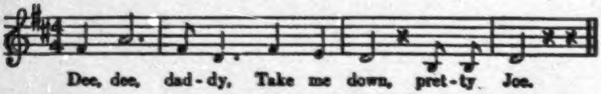
[9] From Eddings' Point School. Cf. Parsons, pp. 137-39.

Nex' day she go back to de water an' sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe."



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An' de mermaid rise up an' take her down an' give her plenty good t'ings t' eat, den bring her back up. So dat night, dey keep wonderin' why she not eat. Fin'ly de step-mudder daughter say she gwine fin' out. Nex' day she follow de gal to de river an' hear her sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe,"

an' she see de mermaid rise up an' take de gal down. She run home an' tell her mudder an' de King what she see. So nex' day dey all t'ree went down to de river widout de King daughter knowin' it. De King sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

but no mermaid. Den de step-daughter try it:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

an' up rise de mermaid. King shot de mermaid daid.

When de King daughter come down to de river, she sing like she always sing, but no mermaid. She step down in de water an' sing again:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

but no mermaid. She went on deeper an' deeper, singin' dat song all de time, till she drown. Dat's end o' my story.

XIV

THE CHOSEN SUITOR: ESCAPE FROM THE DEVIL[10]

Once upon a time King had wife an' daughtah. Debbil court de daughtah an' she marry 'im, but she not know 'e been debbil. 'E take de gal home an' 'gin to cut wood fuh burn 'er up. Ole 'oman come an 'tell gal she mus' run away. Give 'er t'ree needles an' tell 'er to t'row one down when she need help.

So de gal take de debbil fastes' hoss an' ride 'im off. De Roostah see 'er an' 'e sing:

"Massa, massa,
Yo' pretty gal gone home 'fo' day dis mornin'."

Debbil say, "I t'ink I yeah my roostah woice." Roostah sing ag'in:

"Go eas', massa, go eas'.
Go wes,' massa, go wes'.
Massa, massa,
Yo' pretty gal gone home 'fo' day dis mornin'."

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[10] From Helen Brown, Eddings' Point School. Cf. Parsons, pp. 45-6.

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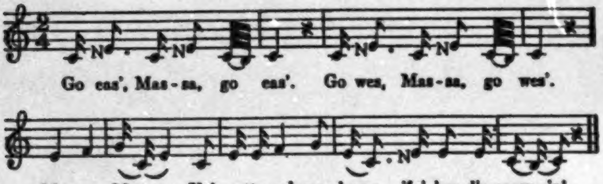
Go eas', Mas-sa, go eas'. Go wes, Mas-sa, go wes'.
Mas-sa, Mas-sa, Yo' pretty gal gone home 'fo' day dis morn-in'.
N

NOTE: N indicates a neutral third, in this case a tone between E and E-flat.

Debbil yeah dat, an' 'e jump on 'e hoss an' staa't fuh obertake de gal. She drop one o' de needle an' big fores' grow up, an' debbil have to git ax an' cut 'e way all t'rough um. but 'e git t'rough an' 'bout to ketch de gal ag'in. She drop annodah needle, an' big rivah rise up, an' debbil have to go back an' git boat an' row across. Gal almos' home now, but debbil git across rivah an' keep a comin'. 'E jes' 'bout to ketch 'er when she drop de las' needle. When she drop dat a big fiah come an' burn up de debbil. Den she git home wid her faddah and muddah.

XV

TOO LAZY TO LIVE[11]

Once there was a slave on Wallace or Tom Fripp Plantation who was too lazy to work. His master punished him, but he wouldn't work. When his master gave him corn to grind for bread, he wanted somebody to grind

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[11] As told by Mr. Aurelius Brown, teacher in Penn School. I found several variants of this story, usually given local settings. It is interesting to note, however, that it was known more than a hundred years ago in Jamaica. In his charming *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, Matthew Gregory ("Monk") Lewis relates that the story was thought to have originated on a certain Jamaican plantation whose owner was accustomed to disposing of his worn-out slaves by sending them to a desolate place called "the Gulley" and leaving them to die of exposure and starvation. The cruel master always had his men bring back the shroud and board so that he would have no expense. See the song, as quoted by Lewis in his *Journal*, p. 322.

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539 it for him. Then he wanted somebody to bake the bread. When the bread was ready he wanted to know if somebody wouldn't feed him. His master said, "Any man that's too lazy to eat is too lazy to live. We'll just bury him."

They made a box and put the man in it and started to the graveyard. The man sang:

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Master sang,

"Car' [carry] 'im along, car' 'im along,"

Then the man,

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Then the Master,

"Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

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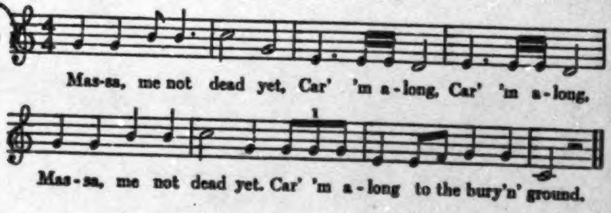
Mas-sa, me not dead yet, Car' 'm a-long, Car' 'm a-long,
Mas-sa, me not dead yet. Car' 'm a-long to the bury'n' ground.

They carried the man on and on toward the graveyard.

"Massa, me not dead yet."
"Car' 'im along, car' 'im along.
Got more money to buy more slaves,
Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

They took him on to the graveyard and put him in the grave and covered him up and let him die.

XVI

GOING TO HEAVEN BY LAND[12]

539

There were two brothers who had confessed Christ and were ready to be baptized. The preacher took one of them by the hand and led him down into the water. He said, "My son, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son," and he plunged him under. The boy slipped out of the preacher's hand and was drowned before he could be saved. So it was the second boy's turn to be baptized. The preacher called him, but he said, "Mister, my brother may have gone to heaven by water, but I am going by land," and he wouldn't allow the preacher to baptize him.

XVII

WHY THE COLORED MAN ISN'T IN HEAVEN TODAY[13]

Once a colored man started for heaven. On arriving at the gate, St. Peter the gate keeper ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding or walking. He said walking. St. Peter said, "I'm mighty sorry, but I can't let you in. You must come riding." The colored man started back home. On his way home he met a white man. He asked the white man, "Where are you going?" The white man said, "To heaven." The colored man said, "I just came from there. St. Peter wouldn't let me in, say I must come riding." The white man said, "I will attend to that. I will get down and ride you half the way, and you must ride me the other half." With this the colored man agreed, and he rode upon the white man's back half the way. Then he got down and let the white man get on his back. When they got to the gate the white man knocked. St. Peter ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding. White man said, "Yes." St. Peter said, "Left your beast on the outside and come in." The white man went into heaven and the poor colored man was left outside.

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[12] As written by Nathan J. Smalls, student at Penn School. There is a surprising number of tales and jokes about preachers, deacons, etc., in the Sea Islands. Most of them are of fairly recent origin, having been introduced from the outside. Humerous anecdotes about Irishmen are also very common, as they are in many other parts of the South. I was surprised to find on St. Helena Island practically every Irishman story that I was familiar with in Texas as a boy.

[13] As written by Kermit Smalls, student in Penn School.

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XVIII

A TALL TALE[14]

Gentlemen, I tell you de trut'. Once I was on a pleasure trip, me an' my employah. I was standin' in de bow of my yacht, I saw two pompers [porpoises] standin' in middle o' river, an' deh was a ole oak tree to Stoad [Stuart's] P'int—dat 'bout twenty mile away—wid a big bee-hive in it. I shoot my rifle an' bus' dat ole oak tree into de river. De pompers ent die from de shot, so I pull off my coat an' leap overboard an' catch de pompers an' pat um on de side. I say, "Whoa, whoa!" I was thirsty fo' a drink, so I tas'e de water an fin' dat de whole river sweet from de bee-hive. De pompers pullin' fas', never stop till 'e get on St. Helena Sound to egg bank. He was drunk from de sweetness of de water. I roll 'im on de sho' an' start back to meet de yacht. When de cap'n reach me I have bass an' trout enough to loaded to yacht, an' den I quit.

[14] Told by Sarah Holmes, Lee-Rosenwald School, Coffin's Point.

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XIX

FAMILY AFFECTION[15]

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Once upon a time there was an old lady and a old man and they were man and wife. The old man was at dinner and his wife and children were on the outside. It was a windy day and the wind blew the house down. The children cried out, "The house fell on popper." The old lady called, "I hope it ain't broke my pipe." The children said, "Wait till I done eat, then you will hear me cry." The end of the story.

XX

OPENING VERSES[16]

1.

Once upon a time, a wery good time,
Monkey chaw tobacco on de railroad line.[17]

2.

Once upon a time de goose run blin',
Monkey chaw tobacco an' de man drink wine.[18]

3.

Beef in de market ten cents a poun',
You never git a poun' till you lay yo' money down.

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[15] Written by Lawrence Mingin, Lee-Rosenwald School.

[16] After hearing one of these at the beginning of a story, I began to ask each narrator if he knew any opening verses. Thereafter I found them to be quite frequent, although they tend to drop out of use as unnecessary embellishments unless something reminds the narrator of them. (538)

[17] Sometimes "on de street cyaar line," sometimes "an' spit white lime."

[18] Sometimes "cat drink wine." Other variations are made by interchanging the names and varying the combinations of the two lines.

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XXI

CLOSING VERSES

1.

I step on a tin,
De tinnin ben',
Dat's de way
My story en'.

2.[19]

I step on de lane
An' walk wid a cane,
An' dat's de way
My story en'.

RIDDLES

524 Several hundred riddles are in circulation on St. Helena. The children can recall amazing numbers of them, especially when riddle contests are held. Some of them can make up new ones indefinitely under the stimulus of competition.

524 177 For the most part the riddles seem to be of European descent, although in many instances it is difficult to say whether one is African or European. Certainly some of them sound more like the African discussion riddles than the ordinary English riddle. For example, a boy relates that a girl was saved from drowning by three men. Trackwell traces her to the river, Divewell recovers her from the water, Breathewell breathes life back into her. "Which one," asks the narrator, "has the best claim to the girl?" Then an argument takes place, sometimes, but rarely, ending in agreement on one of the three. There

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[19] I encountered this only once, in a story told by a girl at Land's End School.

is also a figurative type of riddle which is scarcely a riddle 524 177 from the white child's point of view but which is very much like the African figurative questions. For example, the riddle,

> A rose in de gyaa'den an' a rose outside, what one you take? *Ans.* Rose in de gyaa'den is married gal, rose outside single gal,

is the same sort of thing as the following African riddle:

> The tree in our yard gives shade only to our neighbors. *Ans.* A virgin. She is not of use to men of her own family.

Many of the riddles are of rather recent origin and have been brought in by visitors and immigrants, by joke books, advertising booklets, and the like.

All of the riddles collected on St. Helena cannot be re- 524 produced here, but enough may be given to show the range and variety of this type of folklore.

1. Horse in de stable an' mange (mane) outside, or Horse in de stable an' reinge (reins) outside. *Ans.* 'Tatuh in de bed an' de wine (vine) outside.

2. Chip cherry up, chip cherry down; no man can climb chip cherry tree. *Ans.* Smoke.

3. Black hen set on de red hen's nes'. *Ans.* Pot on de fiah.

4. White man on a red horse back. *Ans.* Teet' on de gums.

5. Somet'in' holler all day an' holler all night. *Ans.* Tree holler.

6. Grumble all day an' grumble all night. *Ans.* Grummle (i.e., groundmole).

7. Go t'rough a tree an' leave e' guts behin'. *Ans.* Needle an' t'read t'rough de cloth.

8. One hun'ed windows an' no do'. *Ans.* Fish net.

9. If deh a hun'ed room, 'e go t'rough 'em all. *Ans.* Broom

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524 10. Somet'in' you plant one an' a whole lot get up. *Ans.* Peanuts.

11. Barks here and bites yonder. *Ans.* Gun.

12. Go up green an' come down ripe. *Ans.* Watermelon.

13. Fattes' t'ing in de worl'. *Ans.* Light'od (Lightwood, or fat pine, used by the Negroes to kindle fires.)

14. Hard all aroun' an' sof' in middle. *Ans.* Bed.

15. I went to London Bridge an' meet a man a-standin'. I shake 'e han' an' suck e' blood an' lef 'um still a-standin'. *Ans.* Pump.

16. Once I was walking along I meet a man a-standin', I cut 'e t'roat an' suck 'e blood an' leave 'im still a-standin'. *Ans.* Bottle o' soda water.

17. What come up to de do' but don' come in? *Ans.* De pat' (path.)

18. A crowd of little mans livin' in a flat-top house. *Ans.* Matches in a box.

19. Somet'in' live on two en', dead in middle. *Ans.* Man plowing wid oxen.

20. My fadder had a house, an' nobody cyan' count de windows in it. *Ans.* A net.

21. If ship stern wort' t'ousan' dollahs, what de head come to. *Ans.* De wharf.

22. Roun' as a dollar, busy as a bee. *Ans.* A watch.

23. Big at bottom, small at top.
In de middle go flippety flop. *Ans.* Churn.

24. Whitey sen' whitey to run whitey out o' whitey. *Ans.* White man sen' white boy run white cow out o' cotton fiel'.

25. If my ring drop in middle o' ocean, how I git it out? Ans. By love.

26. I meet a man, ax his name. He tell me look his walkin' rod. *Ans.* Rattlesnake.

27. What got two look-about, one lick-about, fo' run-about, two stiff-stander? *Ans.* Cow.

28. Wood
John
Mass.

Can you make out the name and address? *Ans.* John Underwood, Andover, Mass.

29. Black man sets on white man's head. *Ans.* Black hen on nest o' aigs.

30. Once I was going up the hipple steeple,
I met a crowd of little people.
Some was white and some was black,
Some was the color of ginger snaps. *Ans.* Ants.

31. I went upon my father's grave, I ate his meat and suck his blood and threw his bones away. *Ans.* Watermelon.

32. A man rode across a bridge and Yet he walked. *Ans.* Yet is dog's name.

33. Two sisters in upstairs window and they can't see each other. *Ans.* Your eyes.

34. I am here alone. I have one leg, one hand, and one eye. They left me here by myself because I cannot walk, but sometimes they will come and shake my hand, and out of my mouth I will spit. Some of my sisters and brothers spit so slow, people hate to shake their hand. I am very swift. I will spit a bucketfull so quick that some people don't believe it. The longer you shake my hand the cooler I get. Can you guess my name? *Ans.* A pump.

35. Me riddle, me riddle, me ree go right,
Guess where I sleep las' Friday night.
Up in an ol' oak my hea't was ache
To see what a hole de ol' folks make.

Ans. Woman had date to meet man under tree. She come early an' go up in tree. Man come an' dig hole—he meant to kill her an' bury her. When he lef', she gone home an' made dis riddle.

36. Man got t'irty-one cow to carry 'cross bridge two time a day to water. How much foot go t'rough de gate? *Ans.* Two, cause man got feet, but cow got hoof.

37. Flower of Virginia, fruit of Spain,
Two meet together in shower of rain.
Put it in a bag and tie it wid a string,
If you guess dat riddle I'll give you a pin.

Ans. Dat's a man and woman, married. Dey kissin'.

524 38. Somethin' open like a barn door an' shut like a trap. You guess every riddle but you never will guess this. *Ans.* An umbrella.

39. What is las' t'ing you take off 'fo' you go to bed? *Ans.* Take foot off o' flo'.

40. Black within, red without,
Four corners round about.
Ans. Chimney.

41. Scrooked as an arrow, busy as a bee. *Ans.* Creek.

42. As I was goin' 'cross a fiel' o' wheat
I pick up some'tin' good to eat.
It was neither fish, flesh, nor bone,
But I kept it till it walked alone.
Ans. Egg.

43. What goes up white an' comes down yellow? *Ans.* Egg.

44. Constantinople is a hard word to spell. Can you spell it in two letters? *Ans.* I-t, it.

45. Crooked as a rainbow, t'iefin' (thieving) as a cat. *Ans.* Snake.

46. Once I was going to London Bridge, I met a man and a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, and I couldn't tell the ladies from the gentlemen. *Ans.* Ants.

47. Who always sit with his hat on before the queen. *Ans.* The coachman.

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PROVERBS

1. Take cyare mo' bettah nor be sorry.
2. 'Mos' kill bird don' make soup.
3. Singin' in the mornin', hawk catch you befo' night.
4. Young folks listen what old folks say when danger keep out of the way.
5. Everything good to hear is not good to talk.
6. Ev'ry grin-teet' don' mean laugh.
7. Ev'ry shut-eye don' mean sleep.
8. A good run is better than a bad stand.

9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538

10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de cob.

TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538

My pretty pink, I really think (539)
That you and I should marry.

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177)

Toasts[20]

273
574
576
539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

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[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*.

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III

273 Thou art my love, and I am thine,
574 I drew thee for my valentine.
576

IV

539 The glass is full of water
And the pail is full of wine,
The world is full of boys and girls,
But, honey, you are mine.

Other Verses

I

Some people have one coat,
T'ank God, I got two.
All de veek I vear a ragged coat,
On Sunday my long-tail blue.

II

I went to de jail-house on my knees,
Firs' t'ing I saw was a pan o' peas.
Peas was red an' meat was fat—
Got stuck on de jail-house jus' fuh dat.

III

I went to de hen-house de odder night,
It was awful dark an' I had no light.
Only de roostah givin' out de hymn,
Givin' out de hymn fuh de hen o' prayah.
Did he preach it!

IV

'Possum on de 'simmon tree
A-winkin' down on me.
I pick up a stick, an' I was so shy,
I pop um across ol' 'possum's eye.

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V

'Possum on de 'simmon tree,
Sparrow on de groun';
'Possum t'row de 'simmon down,
Sparrow shake um 'roun'.

VI

Hawk an' buzza't went to law,
Hawk come back wid a broken jaw.

VII

When I been a little boy
I stayed by myself.
All de bread an' cheese I git,
I put um on de shelf.
De rat an' mice, I nevah see de like.
Rough shirt, standin' collah,
'Nough to make a niggah hollah.
Walk in, John, I'll be yo' frien',
I'm ridin' on a pickynut tree.

VIII[21]

I had a little pony,
His name was Dimple Gray.
I len' him to a lady,
She ride him miles away.
She whip him, she lash him,
She ride him t'rough de mire.
I wouldn' len' my pony 'g'in
Fo' all de lady hire.

IX

All of a row,
Bend a bow,
Shot at a pigeon
And killed a crow.

---

[21] Compare a similar rhyme, with tune, given by Parsons, p. 185.

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X

273 Nose, nose, jolly red nose.
574 What gave you that jolly red nose?
Nutmegs and cinnamon, spice an clo'es,
576 They give me this jolly red nose.
539

XI[22]

There was an old man
And he had a calf,
And that's half.
He took him out of the stall
And put him on the wall,
And that's all.

XII

Since that lady gave you that box,
You look like you are going to have the chicken-pox.

Since people walk on the street,
You are name the days of the week.

Since people don't always go to work on time,
I am writing rhymes.

Where are you going, Jack?
You look like you just come back.

Hello, Si.
You look like you going to cut some rye.

Where is my dog
I took for the frog
That was sitting on the log?

---

[22] This and the one following were written down and turned in by pupils in two of the Island schools. Apparently they are attempts at original rhymes.

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Where are you going, Mary?
You look so contrary.

Play Rhymes and Games[23]

I

539
524

Eeny, meeny, miny, mo,
Ketch a neighbor by 'e toe,
If 'e holler, let 'im go.

II

Ink stink, tobacco stink,
Ketch a neighbor by his toe,
If he holler, let 'im go.

III

Eeny, meeny, dilly, deany,
Hit um a lick an' John de guney.
Time, time, American time,
Eighteen hundred an' ninety-nine.

IV

Cod fish, cod fish,
How many cod fish do you wish?
Four spell four an' you're clean out
Wid yo' mudder dirty dish clot' in yo' mout'.

V

William, William, thrumble toe,
He's a good fisher man.
Ketches hen, put um in de pen.
Wi', bri', limber lock,
T'ree geese in a flock,
One flew eas', one flew wes',
One flew over de cuckoo nes'.
O-U-T spells *out*,
You ol' dirty dish rag, *you!*

---

[23] I-VII are counting-out rhymes. No. VIII is a hide-and-seek form.

VI

539
524

Once I went up the heeple, steeple,
Met a crowd of little people.
Some was white, some was black,
Some was the color of ginger snaps.
O-U-T spells *out*, and you are clean out,
With your mother dirty dish rag in your mout'.

VII

Mother ketch a flea,
Flea die,
Mother cry,
Out go *she*.

VIII

Three little horses in de stable,
One fell down an' skinned his nable.
All ready?
Not yet.
All ready?
Not yet.
Ready, ready?
I'm comin', I'm comin'.

IX[24]

Little gal? Yes, mam!
Won't you go wid me? Yes, mam!
To Tennessee? Yes, mam!
For to hoe some cotton? Yes, mam!
Will you hoe it good? Yes, mam!
Did you went to de barn? Yes, mam!
Did you get any eggs? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it to de cook? Yes, mam!

---

[24] In this and the one following, the children move in a circle around the leader who puts the questions, the circle making the responses. Sometimes they go through the words without forming the ring. All come in loud on the last line of No. X. For other ring games, see Parsons, pp. 199-203.

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To put it in de bread? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it up town? Yes, mam!
Did you shake it all round? Yes, mam!

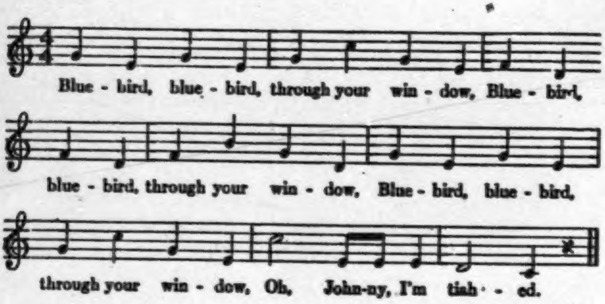
X

What for breakfast? Bread an' butter.
Where is butter? Cat eat it.
Where is cat? In de wood.
Where is wood? Fire burn it.
Where is fire? Water out it.
Where is water? Ox drink it.
Where is ox? Butcher kill it.
Where is butcher? Dead an' gone
An' buried in de ol' bone-yard!

Game Songs[25]

524
533
539

1[26]


Blue - bird, blue - bird, through your win - dow, Blue - bird,
blue - bird, through your win - dow, Blue - bird, blue - bird,
through your win - dow, Oh, John-ny, I'm tiah - ed.

Chorus:

1. Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,

---

[25] For other game songs, see Parsons, pp. 180-83.

[26] The players join hands and form a ring. As they sing the chorus, the leader weaves in and out of the ring, passing under the players' hands. At "take that little boy," etc., he puts his hands on the shoulders of a boy, and, as, the chorus begins again, the boy so indicated leaves the ring and goes with the leader. The process is repeated until all players have been touched and there is no ring left.

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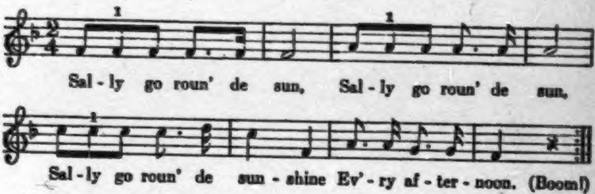
Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed [tired].

2. Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed.

3. Take that little girl, pat 'im on the shoulder, *etc.*

II[27]


Sal - ly go roun' de sun, Sal - ly go roun' de sun,
Sal - ly go roun' de sun - shine Ev' - ry af - ter - noon. (Boom!)

1. Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sunshine
Ev'rỳ afternoon.
Boom!

2. Repeat for other verses.

---

[27] The ring begins to move clock-wise, and at the word *boom* it stops with a jerk and goes around in the opposite direction. The tune, it will be noticed, is the same as *Farmer's in the Dell.*

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III[28]

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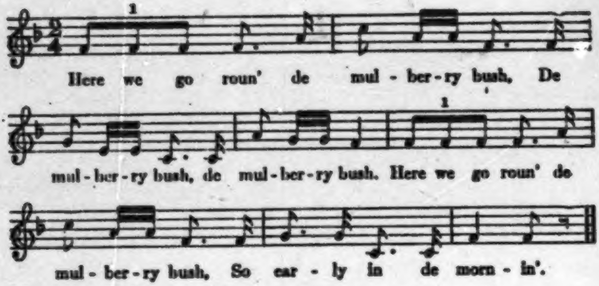
1
Here we go roun' de mul - ber - ry bush, De
mul - ber - ry bush, de mul - ber - ry bush. Here we go roun' de
1
mul - ber - ry bush, So ear - ly in de morn - in'.

Chorus:

1. Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
Mulberry bush, mulberry bush .
Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
So early in de mornin'.

2. Dis is de way we sweep our flo', *etc.*
3. Dis is de way we dus' our flo', *etc.*
4. Dis is de way we wash our face, *etc.*
5. Dis is de way we i'on our clo'es, *etc.*
6. Dis is de way we brush our hair, *etc.*
7. Dis is de way we brush our teet', *etc.*
8. Dis is de way we go to church, *etc.*

---

[28] Signs are made to indicate the various motions. There is no limit to the number of stanzas. At one school the children were singing an agricultural cycle in commemoration of Planting Week. They used such lines as: "This is the way we plow the land," "plant the wheat," "hoe the corn," etc.

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IV[29]

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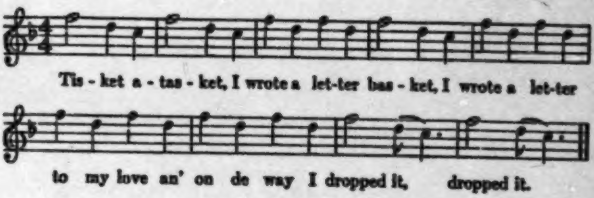
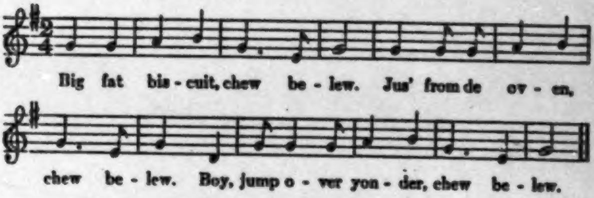

Tis - ket a - tas - ket, I wrote a let-ter bas - ket, I wrote a let-ter
to my love an' on de way I dropped it, dropped it.

1. Tiskit, a-taskit, I wrote a letter basket.
I wrote a letter to my love an' on my way I dropped it.

V[30]


Big fat bis - cuit, chew be - lew. Jus' from de ov - en,
chew be - lew. Boy, jump o - ver yon - der, chew be - lew.

1. Big, fat biscuit, chew belew.
Jus' from de kitchen, chew belew.
Boy, jump over yonder, chew belew.

2. Big fat biscuit, etc.
Girl, jump over yonder, chew belew.

FOLK BELIEFS

771
171

In general it may be said that the folk beliefs of the Negroes of St. Helena Island are not different from the

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[29] This is a form of drop-the-handkerchief. The players were not all sure of the words. Some said, "I wrote a little basket," others said, "I made a little basket." The latter would make better sense, but the majority sang it as given here.

[30] The player designated in the third line runs to the place indicated by the singers. Compare Parsons, p. 201.

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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they 77
have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old- 17
time superstitions because of the influence which Penn
School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people 759
who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order 754
to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or
"voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who 757
actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there 241
are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar 231
phases. But the general status of the island culture as 821
far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the
level of the more backward white groups in this country.
A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs 177
found in the South is of European descent, and this holds
true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs 844
which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Mid- 789
wives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a
hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-
pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the 757
patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been 825
dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud
dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families
try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is
believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even
her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom 758
may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick 789
person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from tak- 776
ing the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, 757
stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of
such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard
and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox,
soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in
a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old
son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that
is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he
was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. Another
(827) woman believed that if a stammering child drank
water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the
spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue unless
[772] it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby
be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
(764) over the coffin from one person to another in order to
[789] prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
764 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his infant
789 was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of
the superstition, but other people at the funeral became
very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give
him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
on the grave the things last used by a person. These are
(171) usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other
inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are
left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

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Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the 764
clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King
related that an old woman showed her some spots on a
mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which
came back because the mirror was not covered. The
water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of [753]
carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will
cause boils and sores on the legs.

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro 128
culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume.
Since there is little in them which differs from Souther [171]
Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to
include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted [114]
for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs
of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed
discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition.

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